

A Taste of Mingus



Recipes & Stories from Mingus Mountain Camp

*Foreword by
Official Arizona State Historian
Marshall Trimble*

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Alas, the area was too rugged and mountainous. It was impossible to transport the rich ore from that remote area. That wouldn't be possible until the late 19th century.

During a period of nearly eighty years beginning in 1876 and ending in 1953, hard rock miners dug out more than a billion dollars in gold, silver and copper from Cleopatra Hill. The town that sprang up on the slopes of the "Money Mountain" was called Jerome for a New York banker who insisted the town be named for him although he never bothered to pay it a visit.

Jerome was better-known as the "Billion Dollar Copper Camp," and was once the third largest city in Arizona. Businesses and homes hung precariously on the steep slopes of Cleopatra Hill. It was said that if a resident were to fall off his front porch he would land on his neighbor's roof. Many householders could lean out of their kitchen windows and scratch matches on their neighbors' chimneys.

When a rich body of ore was found beneath the town itself, millions of tons of dynamite were used to blast out the tunnels and mine the ore. After a blast in 1925 in which 250 pounds of dynamite was used, Jerome began to slide down the slope nearly a half-inch a month. Braces, beams and concrete blocks were used to keep buildings from tumbling into the valley a quarter of a mile below. Ironically, this coincided with the Great Depression when the price of copper dropped to less than six cents a pound.

Mayor Harry Mader coined a new motto for the town when he declared, "Jerome is a City on the Move." Unfortunately it was – *all downhill*.

After the mines closed in 1953 Jerome soon became Arizona's most famous ghost town. But the town was too tough to die and today Jerome is one of the state's most popular tourist towns, attracting more than a half-million visitors a year.

– *Marshall Trimble, Official Arizona State Historian*



Cleopatra Hill, Jerome Arizona





A panoramic view of Mingus Mountain Camp bounded by the forest road.

A Brief History of Mingus Mountain Camp

Nestled on a mountaintop in a private enclave of forest and meadow, Mingus Mountain Camp is a unique treasure in Arizona. Established in the late 1940's by the Methodist church, Mingus, as the camp commonly is known, sits atop Mingus Mountain, which rises to a height of 7,734 feet between Prescott Valley and the Verde Valley. The town nearest to the

camp is Jerome, the Billion Dollar Copper Camp of the late 1800's to early 1900's. In the late 1800's to early 1900's, the site of the camp was the summer homestead of the Cook family, who farmed

potatoes, built a house and barn on the site and carved a root cellar from the hillside.



Root cellar of Cook Family Homestead.

Norman Fain, 1941



In the early 1940's, the camp's site was owned by a prominent Arizona family, the Fains. Norman Fain was an iconic Arizonan—cattleman, athlete, politician, businessman and proponent of square dancing on horseback. Raised on his family's cattle ranch, Fain graduated from Prescott High School and set off for Stanford University, where he was captain of the Stanford boxing team. After graduating with a degree in Political Science, Fain returned to Arizona and ranching, settling near Dewey. Fain served three terms in the Arizona Senate and, over time, expanded his business interests beyond ranching into a variety of enterprises. His quadrille team, which performed square dance on horseback, played before audiences in Madison Square Garden in New York City.

During World War II, a young Methodist named Francis LaPoint served as an assistant to the Chief Chaplain of the Fourth Air Force in San Francisco. After the conclusion of the war and his separation from the Air Force, LaPoint was hired by the Southern California Arizona Methodist Conference to initiate the development of church camps. The War was over, the Baby Boom was underway, and the Methodist church strategically undertook the creation of camps that would serve the people of California and Arizona.

In 1947, LaPoint discovered a tract of land on Mingus Mountain, which he believed would be an ideal location for a camp.

Those who knew LaPoint say he noted that the prospective campsite's seclusion was advantageous, so that children's enthusiastic shouts and laughter would not disrupt the peace of any neighbors. LaPoint entered into negotiations with the Fain family, who owned the land, convincing the Fains that the tract of land

on the mountaintop would be an excellent site for a camp that would serve young people. Convinced of the value of such a camp, the Fains sold the land to the Methodists for the price of \$12,000—approximately \$97 per acre.



energetic volunteer labor force. Boy Scouts from a Methodist church's troop performed the initial surveys of the site. Methodists recycled a handful of rustic miners' cabins from nearby Jerome, transporting the cabins to camp by flatbed truck.

Over the years, Methodist volunteers constructed the basic buildings the camp required. Toothaker Hall, which served as the camp's first dining hall, was completed in 1950. On a hillside above Toothaker, outdoor showers were built the following year, with the heat for the showers provided by a wood fire under the water tank. In 1953, volunteers recycled portions of the original Cook family homestead into a hillside meeting hall and chapel, which currently serves as the Craft Hall.



Women's washstand in the woods.

Under LaPoint's leadership, Methodists from Arizona and California built Mingus Mountain Camp, providing funds for materials and an



Boy Scouts from Troop 45 did the initial survey of the camp in 1948.

Black and white photos courtesy of Mingus Mountain Camp Archives.



A 220° panoramic view of Mingus Mountain Camp meadow.

On a Mountaintop and Surrounded by History

Mingus Mountain Camp enjoys a spectacular setting atop a mountain near historic Arizona sites. Brimming with life and activity, the mountain rises from the valleys below to provide the perfect venue for experiences that only can occur atop a mountain.

When Paul and Susie Lidbeck arrived at Mingus in 1963 to serve as camp managers, they had never before seen the site of the camp. Francis LaPoint, who hired them, had described the camp's location with these words: on a mesa in Arizona. What type of environment did the Lidbecks expect with that description? Perhaps grassland or chaparral or woodland. But what they in fact found was a conifer forest biome, an environment in which Ponderosa pine, juniper and Gambel oak tower over the forest floor. The environment into which they moved experiences four distinct seasons in each year and supports elk, deer, bear, mountain lion, and a large variety of smaller mammals, reptiles and birds. Mingus' elk herd numbers somewhere in the range of 30 elk, with deer populations in greater number. Rarely, a black bear or mountain lion is seen on the mountain.



Mingus Mountain Camp Story

Ring the Bell

It's time to ring the bell! For many campers, especially children, ringing the cast iron bell at Mingus is an experience they'll always remember. The Mingus bell plays a pivotal role at camp, calling campers to their meal three times a day, announcing the time for transition to the next activity, and, in the event of a fire drill, calling all campers to the meadow. Chris Hill's favorite time when the bell is rung is at the end of FOB (flat-on-back) time during children's camps, when the children can be seen flying out of the cabins to the camp store.

Mingus' first bell was a farmhouse bell that stood on a pole in the meadow across from the Dining Hall. A Methodist woman from Glendale, Arizona, gave that first bell to the camp. In the early 1980's, Boots Barto located a 26" cast iron bell, cast by the C. S. Bell Company in Ohio in the early 1900's, that had hung at a schoolhouse in Reserve, New Mexico. This large bell, he believed, would be the perfect bell for camp—large enough to be heard throughout the entire acreage.

With financial assistance from a Masonic Lodge in the Verde Valley, Boots made the trip to New Mexico and brought back the bell. Boots hung the bell by himself, anchoring it to an enormous Ponderosa pine tree that stood between the Dining Hall and the Nurse's Cabin. Boots, whom people referred to as a gentle giant, attached a rope to the trunk of the tree, and using tackle and pulleys raised the 350-pound bell to secure it in its high perch. Duane Allred remembers that the bell tree was struck by lightning some years before, causing bark from the tree to shoot through a window of the Dining Hall. Former camper Amanda Taussig Nemec remembers when the bell was struck by lightning while she was at camp.

In December of 2009, a fierce winter storm battered Mingus, taking down the large Ponderosa pine tree adjacent to the Dining Hall and shattering the camp's bell. Brandon Hill remembers that winds were between 60

and 70 miles per hour. "On the mountain, the Ponderosa pines were almost doubled over with the wind," he says. The large Ponderosa pine supporting the bell blew over and impaled a limb in the roof of the Dining Hall.



On Labor Day weekend of 2010, a “new” bell for Mingus was dedicated.

A family from the Phoenix area located a bell in Michigan that was the identical type of bell that was broken in the December storm of 2009.

They provided the funding for the design, engineering and construction of the bell tower from which the bell was hung. Today, a “new” bell rings from a prominent location across from the Dining Hall, calling everyone to gather together around the table for nourishment and fellowship.

Ring the Bell! Let's eat!



Over 120 campers and day visitors attended the Bell Dedication Service at Mingus Mountain on September 5, 2010

Creamy Curried Vegetable Soup

3 cups potatoes, cut into 1" cubes
3 cups cauliflower florets
1 ½ cups sliced carrots
¾ cup coarsely chopped red bell pepper
½ cup chopped onion
3 ½ cups vegetable broth, chicken stock or combination
1 (15-oz.) can garbanzo beans, rinsed and drained
2 tsp. curry powder
2 tsp. fresh grated ginger
½ teaspoon salt
a dash, crushed red pepper
1 (14-oz.) can unsweetened coconut milk
2 Tbsp. snipped fresh cilantro

Stovetop version: Cook vegetables in broth on stove for an hour or more. Add beans, spices, and continue cooking. When cooked through, blend some of the mixture with an immersion blender to create a smoother soup, if desired. Finish by adding coconut milk. Garnish with fresh cilantro, if desired.

Crock pot version: Combine all the fresh vegetables and beans, sprinkle with spices and pour broth over all. Cook all ingredients except coconut milk on high for 4 hours or low for eight. Stir in coconut milk prior to serving. Garnish with fresh cilantro if desired. For a creamier soup, blend some of the mixture using an immersion blender. Garnish with fresh cilantro, if desired.



Mingus Mountain Camp Story

Native American Connections

LaVersa Barto remembers that Yavapai Apache came to Mingus annually during the 1960's, along with their Tribal Chairman. Additionally, Navajos came to camp each year, with dances by the fire circles at night. In 1974, LaVersa and Boots Barto traveled to Spokane, Washington, for the World's Fair. Navajos from Arizona were featured in dances at the Fair. LaVersa and Boots greatly enjoyed their performance from the audience. When the Navajos spotted the Bartos in the audience, they went into the audience, brought up LaVersa, and danced with her on the stage. In 2010, Mingus expanded its connection to the Native American community, serving an Indian Nations camp with seventeen tribes represented.



*LaVersa Barto at Camp Managers' Reunion, May 2010.
Photo Courtesy of Wally Athey.*



Molasses Cookies

★ *Mingus Favorite!* ★

½ cup Crisco®	1 Tbsp. baking soda
1 cup cooled melted butter	1 Tbsp. cinnamon
2 cups white sugar	½ tsp. ground cloves
2 eggs	½ tsp. nutmeg
½ cup molasses	1 tsp. ginger
4 cups flour	1 tsp. salt

Combine Crisco, butter and white sugar. Beat on medium speed for 5 minutes with paddle. Add eggs, beating well. Slowly add molasses. Mix dry ingredients. Add dry mixture gradually to wet mixture. Drop by rounded tablespoon onto ungreased cookie sheet. Bake at 350 degrees for approximately 10 minutes. Under-bake a little if you like them chewy. This recipe makes approximately 50 cookies.



Mingus Mountain Camp Story

Rites of Passage

Over the years, Mingus Mountain Camp has been the venue for a range of significant events in the lives of children, youth and adults.

While scores of families have enjoyed significant life events at Mingus, the camp managers' families have a special bond with the place they made their home. Jill Lidbeck was brought home to camp as a newborn infant and baptized there, in the presence of 109 campers who were there on a work camp. Memorial services for Boots Barto and Susie Lidbeck's parents were held at camp.

The camp managers particularly enjoy watching the cycle of families attending camp, seeing young parents who were campers and children from Family Camp who then come to summer camp. Mingus' camp managers each remember former campers who found spiritual inspiration at camp. Many clergy in Arizona and California were inspired to enter the ministry when they were at Mingus.

Mingus' Strength for the Journey camps have provided comfort and support to individuals and families affected by HIV/AIDS. At Mingus, Brandon Hill notes, "People have found a safe sanctuary where they are greeted with the open arms that United Methodist camps offer."



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- ★ Mingus Favorite!
- ✓ Camp-Size Recipe





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A Taste of Mingus

This is the story of a historic camp in the center of Arizona that sits on a mountaintop a mile and half above sea level.

Established in the late 1940's, Mingus Mountain Camp has nurtured and nourished generations of campers under towering Ponderosa pines and night skies splashed with countless stars.

Mingus Mountain Camp Archives.



A Taste of Mingus celebrates Mingus Mountain Camp, its stories and recipes, drawn together as a labor of love by an all-

volunteer force. Whether or not you've ever camped at Mingus Mountain Camp, you'll appreciate the stories of how the camp came into being and the pioneering people who made it happen. All of the recipes have been served at the camp and are tried and true.



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