

TAPE C-116
SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW WITH NICHOLAS CUTHBERT

Date: July 27, 1989

Interviewer: Sandy Crain

In 1989, Nicholas Cuthbert visited Hiwan Homestead Museum to be interviewed about summers spent there in the 1930s when it was still Camp Neosho.

A week after he graduated from high school in New Jersey, Cuthbert's sister Elizabeth ("Giz"), secretary to Dr. Josepha and Father Charles Douglas at Camp Neosho, phoned and invited him to visit. Along with his father, Giz was Cuthbert's mentor. Cuthbert estimated that 80 percent of the time spent at Camp Neosho was free time while the remaining 20 percent involved work such as taking visitors on sight-seeing hikes, for which he was paid in room and board.

Mr. Cuthbert spent three months (June, July and August) in both 1932 and 1933 at Neosho, and two months in summer 1934 at what he understood as the Retreat Center, but which Sandy Crain insists was the Music Camp, where the "retreats" were actually held for the purpose of studying church music. This was down the road from Camp Neosho at the church of the Transfiguration. Cuthbert comments: "Funny, I never got that message." While at Camp Neosho, he lived in a tent but at the Music Camp, he lived in a cabin.

He recalls washing dishes at the Retreat Center and spending evenings with Dr. Josepha (Dr. Jo) Douglas in the downstairs sitting room at the Camp Neosho house. He would light a fire in the fireplace and they would talk for a long time. She kept a tight rein on things but she was very kind to him.

Giz encouraged him to attend college. Eric Douglas took him to see Dr. Nedrock at Chappell House (later the Denver Art Museum) to seek advice on what school to attend for museum training in natural history. Giz's husband paid his tuition but Mr. Cuthbert also washed dishes while at the University of Iowa. He graduated a semester early by working one summer at a University of Iowa biological station. His degree is in ornithology and his basic interest is in field biology.

Nicholas Cuthbert talked about Camp Neosho buildings, but mostly about Canon and Dr. Douglas as well as Eric and Frieda Douglas and their children and a number of friends of the Douglas family, as well as his mother, who visited Evergreen for her health in 1915. He brought a copy of a letter his mother wrote to her father from Evergreen, and a 1938 letter from Giz in Moorestown, N. J., to Nicholas.

Nicholas Cuthbert was a resident of Mount Pleasant, Michigan when he was interviewed, having held a teaching position at Central Michigan University in that town for thirty-three years.