In 1933, Fred S. Hutchins gave fifty-three acres to the Glade Street Branch of the Young Women’s Christian Association (Y.W.C.A.) for use as a girls’ camp. By July, workers from Federal Aid Labor had built roads, tennis courts, picnic grounds with rustic seats, tables and outdoor kilns, several trails and bridges, and sanitary houses. The Y.W.C.A. secured a grant of $17,500 from the Works Progress Administration during 1935, funding the construction of a dam, kitchen, and other buildings. Single, young women who had come to Winston-Salem to work, grouped as residence girls, business girls, and industrial girls, used the camp for recreation in the evenings and on weekends.

In 1936, the camp was named in honor of former Winston-Salem Y.W.C.A. president Betty Linville Hastings, who had chaired the Camp Committee from 1933-1935. That year, the Y.W.C.A. began to offer a residential summer camp for girls between 8 and 15 years old. The Shipwreck Party was a tradition for summer campers. Older girls had mixers and dances with boys from the Y.M.C.A.’s Camp Hanes. The Aquacade, a water pageant showcasing swimming and canoeing skills, entertained parents on the last day of the season.

In 1940, Winston-Salem architect Harold Macklin designed a new caretaker’s residence, gymnasium, and administration building – named Hutchins Hall to honor the land donor. A brochure for the residential summer camp advertised the administration building, complete with a stage, stone fireplace, arts & crafts room, and store; a kitchen and dining room; bath houses; screened sleeping cabins; tennis courts; a baseball diamond; a badminton court; a croquet court; outdoor fireplaces for cooking; the lake; an archery range; a health hut; and an outdoor rustic amphitheater.

In 1955, the North Carolina student nurse group of the Baptist Student Union asked to use Camp Betty Hastings for an interracial meeting. The Committee considered and approved the request in April. In March 1958, the Camp Committee requested an official ruling from the local Y.W.C.A. Board regarding use of the camp by racially integrated groups. The Committee recommended to the Board that “The camp may be used by integrated girl’s and women’s church, college and professional groups for leadership training purposes. We suggest that at the present time no co-ed groups be admitted.” After discussion, the Board approved the policy but clarified that the camp could be used by Y.W.C.A. integrated, co-ed groups.

“There are pictures of African-American and Caucasian girls camping together in the 1950s” said Florence Corpening, CEO of the Y.W.C.A. from 1995-2011. “Erasing racism has been part of our organization’s mission for many,
many years.” “The camp brought black women and white women and their daughters together long before that was the norm,” according to Rev. Ellen Yarborough, a former director of the camp. “The YWCA was active in school integration and we integrated camp during the civil-rights movement.”

The local branches of the Y.W.C.A. merged to form a racially integrated organization in the mid 1970s, and Camp Betty Hastings became fully integrated too. The camp closed in 1984, and it was sold to a private buyer in 1985.

**Camp Civitan**

In May 1943, the Civitan Club purchased from V.O. and Anna Marshall ninety-six acres for the Young Men’s Christian Association (Y.M.C.A.) to use as a camp for African-American boys. The land included a mid-nineteenth century log building, Eaton Lodge, which was used as the dining hall. Six log cabins and an open-air pavilion with log rooms on either side completed the facilities.

During the late 1940s and 1950s, Camp Civitan was operated jointly by local African-American youth organizations. These included the Chestnut Street Branch of the Y.W.C.A., the Patterson Avenue Branch of the Y.M.C.A., the Girl Scouts, and the Boy Scouts. The integrated camp operating committee had representatives from all four organizations. Each organization was allotted a two-week summer period during which it could offer a residential camp. During the summer of 1947, donations from the Community Chest and Civitan Club funded improvements, including damming the lake, construction of shower bath houses, replacement of kitchen appliances, and the installation of dining equipment. Y.W.C.A. minutes from 1952 record that electricity had been run to the camp.

As the Camp aged, groups began to pull out of the Cooperative. The 1957 minutes of the Old Hickory Council of the Boy Scouts state “all of us have realized that this Camp [Civitan] is poorly equipped and does not have the facilities required for the operation of a Scout Camp as called for by National Scouting Standards.” Y.W.C.A. minutes from 1958, state that “Camp Civitan was the subject of lengthy discussion. The camp is in need of considerable attention. It is presently used by the YMCA, YWCA, and Girl Scouts….the United Fund recommended recently that Camp Civitan be rebuilt completely on a new site or abandoned.” The following spring, the Y.W.C.A. Board took “action to withdraw from Camp Civitan because of the conditions there.”

Advertisements and newspaper articles indicate that Camp Civitan had transitioned to a day camp managed by the Patterson Avenue Y.M.C.A. by the 1970s. For example, an advertisement from 1977 announced a 5-day, outdoor program for boys and girls, ages 8-12. The camp offered swimming lessons, hiking, football, basketball, boating, canoeing, trips, and arts & crafts for a weekly cost of $22 for Y.M.C.A. members. The camp was used during the summer as free lunch site for school-aged children and to conduct health training.

In September 1986, the Y.M.C.A. of Winston-Salem/ Forsyth County returned ownership of Camp Civitan to the Winston-Salem Foundation, as required by the 1943 deed if the camp “should ever cease to be used for a Young Men’s Christian Association Camp for colored boys.” Wachovia Bank & Trust Co. was authorized to sell the property in November of that year. The land was sold to a private buyer in 1987. The proceeds from the sale were put into a designated fund at the Foundation, which is used to provide camperships for members of the Winston Lake Y.M.C.A.

This information is also available at the Forsyth County Historic Resources Commission web site: www.ForsythCountyHRC.org