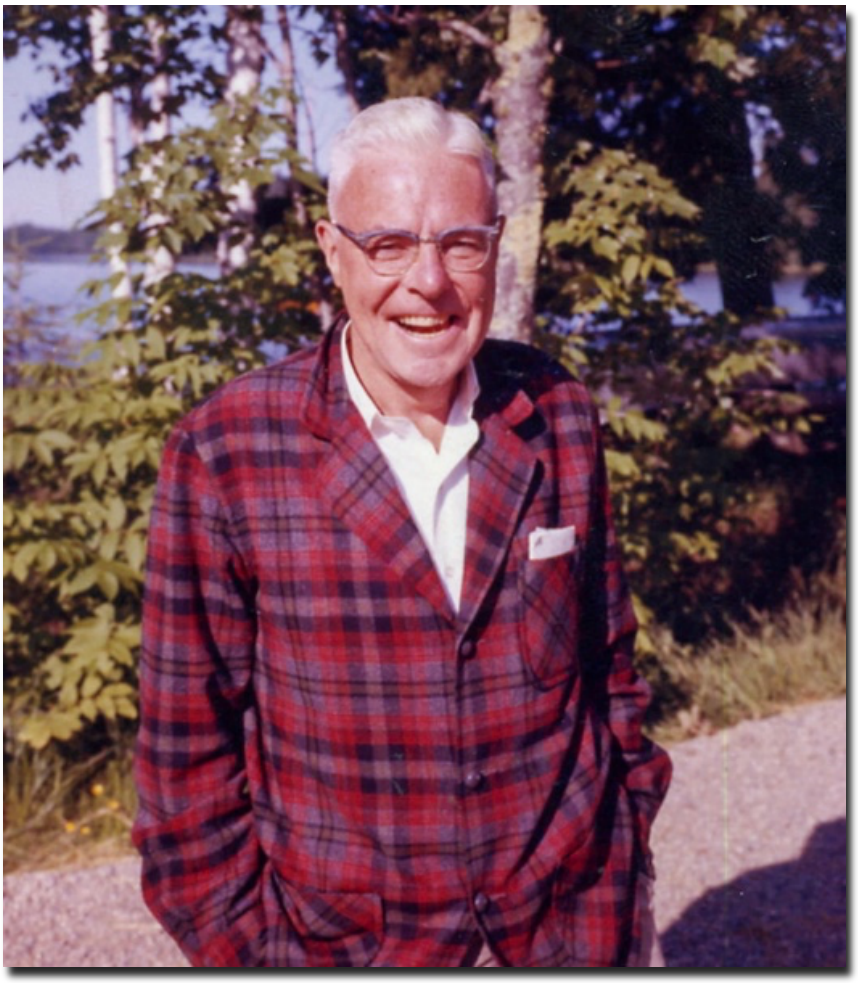
THE JOHN ROWE TAPES:
CAMP WARREN MEMORIES



John Herbert Rowe, Jr.

12 May 1906 – 22 May 1995
Staff 1929 –1936
Executive Director 1936 – 1969

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CAMP WARREN MEMORIES

Written and recorded by John Rowe, assisted by John Bold
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Acknowledgements

First, thanks to John Rowe for his over forty years of dedicated service to the YMCA and youth. John dedicated his life to Camp Warren and its campers. Without his foresight to record Camp Warren's early history, much of it would have been lost. John explained many of the design, operational and philosophical decisions made in those early years that are manifest in today's camping experience. John's recorded notes were lightly edited to retain his "voice".

Thanks also to Sandy Kailanen, who was the camp's secretary during the early and mid-1970s. Since John Rowe recorded his memories on cassette tapes, which no doubt deteriorated over time, this history may have been lost if Sandy had not made "hard" copies.

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Ken Lippin also needs special acknowledgement. Ken has devoted many hours to converting photographs of camp, campers and camp activities and various documents to digital formats. His effort means that these rare artifacts will be preserved for future generations. Ken also made a huge contribution by selecting all the photographs included in this document.

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Introduction

YMCA Camp Warren is one of six sleep-over camps operated by the YMCA of the North. It's located in Saint Louis County, approximately seven miles south of Eveleth, Minnesota and one hundred and ninety miles north of the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and Saint Paul, Minnesota.

Camp Warren began with just forty-eight male campers. It now serves over nine hundred young people, half in three all-boys sessions and half in three all-girl sessions. It also provides family camps, where families and friends can share a cabin for several days, use all camp facilities, and be served meals in the communal dining halls. Warren is also rented out as a venue for weddings, church groups, ski clubs and special events.

The camp has grown from its original eighty acres nestled among the pines on the northeast end of Half Moon Lake to approximately six-hundred acres encompassing nearly the entire lake--the entire shoreline except one lake home and swampy acreage in "Back Bay" owned by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. It owns shoreline on three Lakes—Half Moon, Homaji, and Pleasant—and surrounding deciduous and coniferous forests.

Camp Warren offers many traditional camp activities, such as horse-back riding, athletics, tennis, handicrafts, swimming, boating, canoeing, sailing, dramatics, and photography. Progression though various levels or ranks has long been a Warren hallmark, so each camper can earn rights to participation and greater independence based on skill level. Warren has always had a robust out-of-camp camping program, including wilderness canoe trips in the nearby Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. In recent decades it has sponsored lengthy sailing trips on Lake Superior in a sailboat dubbed the "Fifty-Fifty".

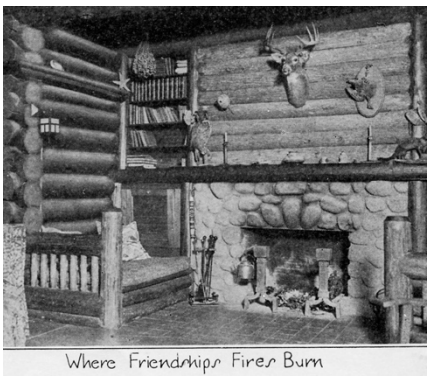
Camp Warren is now entering its ninety-fifth year of operation, with its centennial year coming on fast--certainly a major milestone for any institution. We wish Camp Warren the very best in its journey into its next one-hundred years.

THE PHYSICAL PLANT

THE FOUNDING OF CAMP WARREN

In the spring of 1928, the Young Men's Christian Association of Minneapolis (YMCA-MPLS) acquired title to a beautiful lake and forested property six miles south of Eveleth. The property was purchased from Mrs. O.B. Warren. Behind this purchase was the general secretary of the YMCA-MPLS, Frank O. "Stoney Koehler", and a committee appointed by the YMCA Board of Directors that was tasked with the job of finding a suitable site for a fourth YMCA camp. The committee had inspected many sites, but the Warren one proved to be the best.

Following the recent death of her husband, Mrs. Warren decided to sell the property because she no longer wished to use it as a summer home without him. The purchase agreement undervalued the property by $5,000, this amount a gift from Mrs. Warren to the YMCA. In return, the YMCA agreed to name the camp "Warren" as a memorial to her husband, O.B. Warren, a mining engineer who had lived in Minneapolis and worked on the Iron Range for many years. After five years, the YMCA was free to change the name, but never did.



The property consisted of about 80 acres of forested land bordering three small lakes: Half Moon, Homaji, and Pleasant. It included a magnificent log building that had served as the Warren family's summer home. There were also some farm buildings built around a clearing that housed a caretaker and his family as well as extra men hired on occasion to help in the operation of the place. The main building on the property, which was later christened Homaji, was constructed of pine logs that had been harvested from the property. It was said that Mr. Warren was so interested in the construction of this building that he supervised the fit and placement of each log. The property contained many virgin White and Norway Pines, so the logs used for the building were massive.

The plan was to open the camp in the summer of 1928, and Homaji would serve as the headquarters for that first summer. It was to include a space to care for ill campers, some living quarters for staff in the upstairs bedrooms, a camp kitchen, and a camper dining hall. The planning group decided to build six log cabins, each to house eight campers and two counselors. It was also necessary to construct a toilet building to serve the campers. Each cabin would have an inner bunk room for all ten occupants and an outer room with a fireplace which would serve as a living room. Later on it was decided to increase the number of boys served with ten sleeping in the bunk room and

the two counselors moving into the living room. The construction of these cabins was financed by the interest from two generous endowments to the YMCA by George Dayton. Mr. Dayton had originally given $100,000 to the YMCA with the stipulation that the interest from it was to be used for new projects. Then the Depression hit and reduced the annual earnings to about half of what Mr. Dayton had originally expected. He gifted another $100,000 so the same interest could be anticipated. The YMCA board voted that for a year or two the income from this fund would go towards the building of the six cabins with the aim of being ready for operation that summer. Time was tight, so a contract was signed with a well-known log cabin builder, Simonson, from the Lake Vermillion area. The logs were to be supplied by him and were not to be taken from the property. Work began immediately. Some of the trails to the new cabins were fairly low and had to be built up.

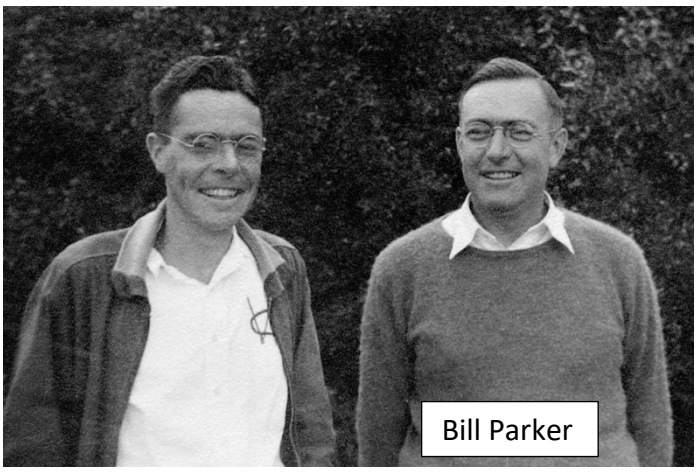
At this point, we should pause to consider some of the people who helped make Camp Warren possible. Stoney Koehler was a key mover. It was fortunate for Camp Warren as well as the total YMCA-MPLS camping program that he was a man who believed strongly in the value of camping. Mr. Koehler felt that there were few methods that could contribute so much to youth development as an effective camping experience. Later, when Mr. Koehler was on leave of absence from the YMCA to work on a World Youth Fund project, he wrote me: “I hesitate to remember how long ago it was that we purchased Warren, but it was quite a number of years ago. I am convinced that it was one of the best investments the YMCA has ever made.” The date on the letter was April 26, 1949. Mr. Koehler remained close to the operation of the camp and, as a father and a grandfather, profited as his son and grandson attended camp.

In 1961 he was amused by a letter written by one of his grandsons to his mother and father and sent this excerpt to the camp administrator: “If this letter gets there late, it’s because I wrote it on Saturday and didn’t send it ‘til Sunday because, if I sent it on Saturday, I would have had to write another one on Sunday. Yours truly.”

At that time, it was camp policy to require a letter home as a ticket of admission to Sunday dinner in an attempt to avoid constant complaints from parents whose sons were not writing home. No exceptions were made, but this boy had figured out that it certainly wouldn’t do to send a letter home two days in a row.

There were many individuals both on the staff and on boards and committees who were charged with the selection of the site. Among these was I.A. Lautenschlager, General Secretary; Lawrence Youngblood, a staff member of the West/Lake Branch; and O.R. Tripp, also a Minneapolis staff member and the man who had selected the site for Camp Menogyn. One of the adjuncts to a successful camp is the camp caretaker. The YMCA was very fortunate that Joe Diggerness, who had been Mrs. Warren’s caretaker for a number of years, agreed to stay on. He held that position for 19 years. His know-how and familiarity with the area and facilities contributed much to the camp’s successful operation.

Bill Parker was chosen as the first director. He was a logical choice for a lot of reasons. One was that Mr. Parker was the executive secretary of the YMCA West/Lake


Bill Parker

Branch, an area that was expected to furnish many of Warren's campers. He was an extremely patient person who respected the worth of people, loved the outdoors, and had concrete goals for helping youth grow. He remained director for the camp's first eight years. He left to accept a position as executive director of a children's home in New York state operated by the Certa Foundation. He went on from there to become the general secretary of the Miami YMCA and, later, general secretary of the Atlanta, Georgia YMCA. He was recognized as a trail blazer and established leader in both those positions. For the eight years I worked in the same office with Bill, I can attest that I could not have had a happier experience or a more considerate boss. His two sons assumed leadership positions in the YMCA—Burton as a member of the YMCA staff and Donald as a counselor at Camp Warren. When Bill's wife died, he asked for permission to bring her ashes to the camp where he scattered them, because, as he said, the eight years that his family had lived together at Warren were the happiest years of their lives. Tragically, Bill was shot to death by a mentally deranged young man as he left his office in Atlanta. The young man felt that Bill was responsible for him losing his job at the Atlanta YMCA, but no one who knew Bill would believe that he had acted unfairly in his dealings with the young man. Bill's son, Donald, believing it was what his father would have wanted, asked permission to bring his father's ashes to Warren where they were scattered.

THE EARLY YEARS

The first year of any camp is a pressure-laden year, and Camp Warren's first year was no exception. As usual the tight construction schedule made it difficult to have things ready at the start of the camp season. To make matters worse, a tremendous windstorm swept through the area the weekend before camp was to open. Mature pine trees were blown down, some of them onto roofs of buildings that had just been completed. It was a blind test for the strength of those cabins. Through that storm and those that came later, the roofs and beams withstood every fallen tree, but the trails became a tangled mess of fallen trunks and branches. The trees leaning on building roofs had to be cleared away. Try to imagine the difficulties that Bill Parker faced that first year of camp.

Later that summer as staff new to camp and its operations ran into

difficulties, it became necessary to ask three uncooperative staff members to leave. Two others quit in a show of sympathy. Since it was a small staff and the total number of campers was 48, this precipitated a crisis. My brother worked that first year as the camp's business manager. He inherited an old car that had been used for work projects around camp, which he used to drive to town for errands. Fortunately**,** he stayed through the first year. Joe Diggerness told me many times how my brother, Kenneth, would volunteer every Sunday to help him kill and dress the numerous chickens needed for the weekly Sunday dinners. One of the unusual supplies that came with the camp when it was purchased was a flock of chickens that the Warren family had maintained on the property. This required someone to get them ready for the table. The fact that my brother, who did not have to do this work, volunteered to help endeared him to Joe Diggerness, and I frequently heard his praises sung as I worked around camp.

I did not work at Warren that first year, because I had been assigned a job at Camp Menogyn. I did, however, stop by there on my way to Menogyn and witnessed the devastation from the storm. Earlier in the spring I had taken the first Minneapolis boys to see the camp on a promotion trip over a weekend. We used a bus that was owned by another YMCA camp to make this trip with about ten boys with the hope they would spread the story of the camp among their peers upon their return.

In the early years, demand for space at camp grew. The first step to taking care of the growing number of campers was to use the old log house up at the athletic field and the chalet to house them. The log house was an old two-story slab building with two rooms up and two rooms down with a staircase in the middle. This building was being used to house camp employees. The next development was using this space for the oldest campers and calling it the Senior Section. The chalet, which had been one of the hen houses, was also used. Another chicken house was used for some time before it was decided to tear it down. The wrecking crew soon realized how well it was constructed because the cement floors and lower walls were tremendously thick. This had been done to protect the hens from wild animal predation.

The Warren family had a real interest in gardening and had won many prizes at the county fair for the produce they raised. They built a water tower and pumped water from Half Moon Lake so they could irrigate the garden during dry spells. When the camp began, I thought it was going to follow this same procedure, but it quickly became apparent we could either raise good boys or good vegetables. Time did not allow for both, and we quickly chose the former. We also allowed the woven wire fence the Warrens had built around the garden to keep out deer and other animals to deteriorate. Relying on normal rainfall, we found we could raise good vegetables most years by keeping the soil

properly fertilized. However, there were summers so dry the garden was not a good producer. We also found that wild animals didn't bother the garden very often. Actually, more damage was done on the occasions the horses escaped their pasture and enjoyed their time in the corn field.

After the Senior Section was built around the athletic field, Bill Parker received numerous requests from parents to accept boys under the camp's minimum age of 12. He finally succumbed to their entreaties, but only with the understanding that we would set aside one intermediate cabin to be used on an experimental basis for boys from eight through eleven. After a couple of years working with these younger boys, we saw so many fine things happening that we made the decision to lower the minimum age to eight. We limited the number of boys to one cabin group, but there was always more demand than spaces. This was one of the reasons we began to think about constructing a separate Cub Section.

One of the buildings adjacent to the athletic field was a pole barn. Part of it only had an earthen floor; we used it to store hay for the horses we kept for program purposes. It worked very well until we decided to increase the number of horses. Since we kept our horses year around, we came to realize we needed a larger facility and storage area for the hay.

During the planning for the Cub program, we assured parents that we would put one of our most mature and experienced counselors in charge, because back then, as now, it has been our philosophy that the younger boys needed the best leadership. August Orr was selected to take charge of the younger boys, and he did a remarkable job. At that point, he was still in medical school. He had never known his parents but had lived in an orphanage until he ran away and, on his own, worked for the railroad, as a longshoreman, and in all kinds of rough jobs that would allow him to survive. He developed the goal of becoming a doctor and put himself through college and medical school. Later, he became a staff member of the North Dakota Board of Health. I can still picture August carrying a large rucksack on his back with eight small Cub campers following him in single file as they went for a hike in the woods. Many years later, August wrote me that, while he was not in the best of health, he still felt that Camp Warren did such a wonderful job for boys that he wanted to contribute to it in some small way. He wanted to send a book or two and wondered if the camp could utilize them. Naturally, we assured him we could. For the next few years until his untimely death, we received a series of very interesting boy's books.

EXPANSION

Stoney Koehler and the YMCA Board of Directors realized early on that the property needed to be added to in order to protect its isolation and make room for expansion. So in those early years, an additional piece of land south and east of the camp was purchased. At that point, the YMCA was not part of the United Fund, but had its own separate fund campaign. The board placed a restriction for funds raised in the campaign for paying off the debt on this land purchase. This was very important because the new camp would have had a difficult time raising the money or charging enough in camp fees to pay for this purchase. Later, after the YMCA joined the United Fund, this payment could no longer be justified in the annual United Fund Campaign. This led to Camp Warren assuming the final few years of payment until the land was paid for. This purchase included some of the beautiful Norway-Pine-clad hills directly across Half Moon Lake as well as the shoreline around the "Back Bay" area where Cub Camp is now located. The land across the lake and around one side of Back Bay had an early fire run through it, but natural reseeding had taken place and a walk through the area showed many beautiful White and Norway Pines coming up.

At the time of the original purchase of the property, the only other residents on the shore of Half Moon Lake were Miss Margaret More and her father, Dr. More. Doctor More owned 180 acres on Half Moon Lake and built his summer home there. Right from the start, Camp Warren turned to the More Clinic in Eveleth for medical services, and Warren found a warm friend in Dr. More. He was not only an excellent physician but was willing to help the camp in many ways, like providing free medical services which greatly helped the budget of a struggling camp, especially in its early years. He would examine all the campers as they arrived at the beginning of each session. After Dr. More died, the East Range Clinic and its doctors also provided many free medical services to the camp. They also provided medical services at a reasonable cost to the parents of individual campers, services we had complete confidence in as far as quality went. When Dr. More died, his daughter Margaret succeeded to the ownership of the property on Half Moon Lake. Through all these many years, she has been a warm friend and has helped camp relationships and programs. The Mores owned three small islands on the lake which we promptly named Phantom, Gunshot, and Treasure and then concocted a fabulous story to explain how each island got its name. Margaret rented one of these islands to the girl scout camp. She allowed Warren to use another lovely little island for camp overnights and church and chapel services. It was a small island with high ground and stately pines. I will never forget the Sunday service of a High-Y training camp held on that island following the regular camping season. Dr. Walter Judd, who had recently returned from his missionary work in China, spoke to the camp. My recollection is that he spoke for a very long time and that the attention of the campers and staff members never wavered. Dr. Judd related his experiences in China in relation to Christian principles and standards.

At the other end of Half Moon Lake was the Fanny Bailey Olcott Girl Scout Camp. This property had been used as a vacation spot for employees of the Oliver Iron Mining Company but was later purchased by the Duluth Girl Scouts to use as a camp. On rare occasions, Camp Warren counselors helped to disrupt our cooperative relationship by appropriating one of their war canoes and hiding it in the Camp Warren

barn or by going over at night and ringing the bell at the girls' camp. These situations, of course, required a good deal of work on the part of the camp director to mend fences. One of the problems that made this relationship difficult to maintain was that one of the directors of the girls' camp had a short tenure, and when an amicable relationship was finally established, the process had to be repeated the following summer with a new director. The operations and programs for both camps were similar. However, because both camps were different in their approach, we agreed to stay at our respective ends of the lake. We also agreed to clear it with the other director if we wished to have *a* group of canoes or a special function in the other camp's "sphere of influence."

After I retired as director, the Duluth Girl Scouts relocated their camping program because the property on Half Moon Lake was no longer large enough to comply with American Camping Association standards, so they put it up for sale. They only owned somewhere between six and eight acres, but a rumor got out that an organization was interested in buying the property to use as a trailer camp. Since the lake was so small, this would have caused access problems as additional people would be using the lake. As a result, the Camp Warren Board under the leadership of its Chairman, Clark Smith, decided it was vital to the best interests of the camp to purchase this property and efforts were made to raise the necessary funds. The money was raised, and the land purchased. Since securing the property was also protection for the More property, which was adjacent to it, it was hoped that eventually it might be possible to exchange the Olcott property for some of the More land contingent to the camp. Meanwhile, the buildings on the Olcott property were razed and the land was used for cookouts and program use.

An additional expansion of Warren was made during my directorship. This came about through an emergency situation. Word was sent to me that dire consequences would occur if any Camp Warren boy or horse was found on the property adjacent to Pleasant Lake on the east and north side of the camp. The problem came about because some horses ridden in that direction had trampled through the garden of the man who lived there. Since the threat was an extremely strong and bitter one, I decided to meet with the owner. An appointment was made, and an amicable visit occurred, during which the owner intimated he would be happy to sell most of his property, retaining a bit for future development of Pleasant Lake lakeshore. The price was reasonable, and the Camp Warren board decided the purchase would give the camp further protection and allow for additional program activities without fear of trespassing. The purchase was made and increased the Camp Warren property to over 400 acres.

I mentioned earlier that the caretaker's cabin had been improved several times over the years. At one time, additions were made that allowed the camp to employ a man with a larger family. The roof was repaired, foundations worked on, furnace installed (first, for use with wood, later with oil). Another building was a log icehouse built because the Warren family put up their own ice each winter, a tradition we continued for the first few years. It was always one of the caretaker's winter chores to harvest ice for summer use. As it was hard, heavy work, additional help was procured. The snow was removed from the surface of Half Moon Lake to allow deep freezing. The ice was then cut, and, using a team and sled, was transported to the icehouse located on the road that led from Homaji to the caretaker's home. The ice was stacked with sawdust between each layer. During the summer it was used to keep the icebox at the

temperature necessary to preserve food. It was no small chore to supply the icebox with ice chunks during the summer. They were transported to the kitchen door in the station wagon. One interesting aside was the problem that arose with the fish campers caught. Often, they were caught in the evening with no time to clean them before taps. As a result, campers would carry the fish to the icehouse where they would burrow a hole in the sawdust, so they could lay the fish against the ice. This was fine when they remembered to remove them the next day, but frequently as boys were wont to do, they forgot all about their catch. Soon we would be guided to the icehouse by the stench of rotting fish.

BEGINNING OF CUB SECTION

With the addition of younger boys at camp, we needed a place to house them. In my judgment some of the best planning went into the buildings of the Cub Section. A fundamental criterion was that Cub camp should be designed to fit the size and age of the boys it would serve. Cabins would be small with beds for the very youngest being five feet long rather than the standard six. Cub tables and chairs in the dining hall would be lower, so their feet wouldn't dangle. Fireplaces in the cabins would also be proportionately smaller. The number of boys housed in each cabin would be lower so that individual attention could be provided. This was necessary because the counselors would need to do things for the younger boys that would be unnecessary with the older ones. It was decided that the cabins with the older Cubs should serve six, while the youngest would only serve four. It was also felt that the Cubs should have their own dining hall and eat separately from the older boys. All the Cub cabins were one room since it was important for the cabin counselor to sleep in the same room with his charges. In addition, toilet and washroom facilities along with a septic system had to be built.

The increase in camper numbers meant that the Homaji porch would no longer be adequate for meal service, and a new dining hall would be needed. We did not want the younger boys to be pushed aside by the older ones and wanted the 36 youngest campers to have their own family life. This led to plans for a dining hall with three separate rooms: one for Seniors, one for Intermediates, and one for Cubs. Instead of the Cubs going to a kitchen counter for their food like the older boys, the idea was developed to have a cart loaded up with food and dessert wheeled into the Cub dining hall where Cub waiters could transfer the food to individual tables. There was a dish

cupboard in each dining room so that each group had their own dinnerware and supplies. All these plans worked well and gave Camp Warren a distinctiveness very few camps possessed. When a sing-along or other program was planned for after a meal, it was easy to move everyone into one dining room with the younger boys sitting on the floor. Fireplaces were also built in each dining room which provided warmth and fellowship that would not have been possible without them. In the course of the planning, it was decided that the dining halls would be solid log construction. The way to reduce the price of the dining hall was to reduce the size of the building. This was done, and the bid was given to a log cabin builder named Simonson. The big logs were purchased from the Lake Vermillion area and transported to Camp Warren. Since we wanted to open the Cub Section at the beginning of the 1936 season, a flurry of activity took over the camp. A place was also needed for the younger campers' campfires, chapel services and other Cub programs. While the Intermediates still used kerosene lanterns, it was decided that electric light would be a safer choice for the Cubs and was planned for all Cub buildings.

The planning and securing of funds for this type of enterprise was no small job. Bill Parker; the Camp Warren Committee; John Snessrude, the draftsman and camp caretaker for Camp Ihduhapi; and Bill Bremicker, camp supervisor for the YMCA-MPLS, all did yeoman service in helping to get the plans drawn up in a way that would serve the boys best. The plans were distributed to various builders for pricing, and, as usual, it was felt that the bids, while realistic, were higher than Camp Warren could afford. Two things followed: Joe Diggerness, the very able Camp Warren caretaker, volunteered to secure three or four local men experienced in log construction to build one of the eight log cabins on a test basis before letting the work out for bids. The logs for cabin #5 were cut from the Camp Warren property. I still remember campers in rowboats going down beyond the intermediate cabins and hauling the logs the men had cut behind their boats back to the site for the cabin where the builders would take over. When cabin #5 was completed and the bills totaled, Joe Diggerness' estimate had been correct. The cabin had been built for quite a bit less than the contractors' bids. Bill Parker and Joe Diggerness turned around and contracted for the other seven cabins with the same men at a price that saved the camp a considerable amount of money. It was decided, however, to buy the logs for the other cabins because it was considered undesirable to remove so many pines from the property.

The original Cub Lodge, which had an interesting development plan, had to be contracted for. In addition to the large main room, two other rooms were also included. One would have a fireplace and be where the director or Cub Section head would live and have his office, and the other, smaller room would act as costume storage. This was needed because a large, elevated stage was going to be built at one end of the main room, so that the camp dramatics program would have a better place to stage

their shows. The planning proved very effective even if the site did not. The problem? It had been built on an especially low piece of land at the far end of the Cub Section. This caused two problems: the boys couldn't use it for games like ping-pong because they would have to hike to the end of the camp to use it, and frost caused the foundation to heave every spring, leaving the building askew. Money was spent two or three times to square it up, but it eventually became too damaged to fix. When it was decided to build a new one, it was relocated to a higher piece of ground in an area the boys constantly walked by. There were also problems with the Cub cabins. Cub #1 was located in an area of clay soil that also caused the foundation to heave in spring. This did not result in the same problems as Cub lodge, but from time to time the foundation had to be replaced.

Construction on the Cub buildings was far enough along on September 7, 1935 that a committee connected with the camp came up to go over the buildings and plans. The men on this committee all had a hand in helping plan the additions. Along with myself, the committee included John Snessrude from Camp Ihduhapi; I.A. Laudenslagger, Assistant General Secretary; Bill Parker, camp director; Paul Bremicker, camp supervisor; Lawrence Youngblood, a member of the West/Lake branch YMCA staff; and M.V. Jenness and Charles Doel, members of the Camp Warren Committee. While much work remained, it became apparent that Cub camp would be open for the 1936 season.

FAMILY CAMP

At the same time that work was being done on Homaji, a director's cabin was being built on the lakefront west of the Intermediate cabins. This was something I had long wanted. It was a place where I could leave a lot of my belongings over the winter. It would give me a place to retreat, to get away from the care and problems of directing the camp. I had been living in whatever facility had room for me. Being a bachelor, most of my years had been spent at the invitation of the Cub Section director, Mons Weum. His room was in the rear of the main room in the Cub Lodge and was large enough for two beds. However, I couldn't get away from work because the room was located in the camp proper. Don Setter, an architect on the Camp Warren Committee, knew of my desire for a director's cabin. He also knew the camp needed so many other things that I couldn't press the matter. Then, one day, while the work on the Homaji's basement was proceeding, he presented me with plans for a director's cabin which contained all the elements we had talked about at some length. At the same time, he handed me a

check for $400, stating he believed the committee would feel they should go ahead with the construction if they had some money to jump start the process. We received an excellent bid from the contractor doing some work on Homaji, because he could use the same men and equipment for both jobs. As a result, the first director's cabin was built. I valued all the touches Don Setter had designed into the building. There were two glass walls in the living room. There were many nights I would lie down on the couch and watch the moon light trace a path across the water. I also enjoyed hosting groups of staff, the camper's council and others. I let my staff know that if they wanted to use my cabin on their day off when I wasn't using it, I would furnish them with a key. This gave them an alternative to going to town and spending their money. I still have a note of appreciation from three staff members: "Dear Mr. Rowe, Thanks for the use of your super cabin. We managed to build a roaring fire before we either sacked out or read. The biggest problem we had was getting the enthusiasm to go out in the cold, cloudy outdoors to eat supper and see a movie. Thanks for the use of your neat cabin. It was the highlight of our day off."

The area where the cabin was built is called "Family Camp", and it had an interesting beginning. The first cabin was built for me to use, and Ted Bennett, a member of the camp committee, was responsible for that building. However, after a year or two, I felt this cabin could perform a more important function. We felt it was extremely important to bring a few of the older men into key positions, such as section leaders or heads of other departments. In order to engage these men for multiple summers, we needed a place for their families. We turned my cabin over to the Edie family. Jack Edie was a notable and very fine teacher at Blake School. He became assistant director in charge of programs and made an important contribution to the life of the camp. Since he had five children the camp needed to take care of his family. Four of his children were boys, all of whom attended camp, but they needed a place to stay between camp periods. Fortunately, his good wife, Helen, was the kind of person who enjoyed the peace and quiet of a cabin off on its own. Some of the wives would become lonely living in a somewhat isolated area, especially because their husbands didn't spend much time at home. But Helen was a bird watcher and enjoyed all phases of nature.

For the first two or three years I lived in my cabin, there was no road into that area. I either had to walk on the path along the lakeshore or take a canoe back and forth between the cabin and the camp. I enjoyed the commute, but sometimes felt too exhausted to do it. There was also the problem of a sunny morning commute and rainy evening ones. We did not have electricity in Family Camp. I used Coleman gas lamps, which were satisfactory, but could be temperamental for people who did not know how to use them. Somewhere along the way, we decided we needed to dig a well so that water would not have to be hauled in, along with a road to carry in materials as well as the director when he was too tired to walk or paddle. The area we had to bring a road through contained some generally low-lying, swampy land. Where there wasn't swamp, there was thick forest. It was a difficult challenge, but we were fortunate in a couple of ways. One was that the foundation for part of the road was the remains of the original highway from Duluth to the Iron Range. Of course, it had become overgrown with trees and bushes, but the foundation was still there. The second, and more important factor, was that friends of ours in the area who owned trucks and heavy equipment volunteered

to build the road for us. This was a tremendous service to the camp. There were many times I visited the work site to find their trucks mired in mud.

Other cabins began to be added to Family Camp. One cabin had originally been located in Indian Circle. This cabin had been moved down beside the road near the Intermediate camp to house a man and his wife. We called it “Close Cabin” because Bob Close and his wife inhabited it for more than a year. Then we decided to move it to Family Camp, which wasn’t an easy process because it hadn’t been constructed carefully. But one winter, the caretaker managed to lift and haul it across the lake and anchor it down in Family Camp. Since he wanted to move it before the snow piled up, he hauled it across the ice at the earliest opportunity. I heard the ice crack and boom as it was being towed. The caretaker was mightily relieved when the cabin was back on solid ground. After that, we built another cabin for Wayne and Marge Erikson and their son, David. Wayne was our outstanding cook and food service manager for many years. He made a great contribution to the camp and the cabin was small return for all the things he did for camp.

Finding Wayne had been a bonus to a visit I made to St. Olaf College. I had contacted the head of the student union who also supervised the food service. He indicated he knew a young man who might be interested in job as head cook. I made the trip to St. Olaf where I interviewed Wayne Erickson. He had no idea if the offer would work out as he and his wife had just moved into a new apartment, and he didn’t know if she would be willing to leave so soon after moving in. Wayne was only twenty-one or two at the time and I had some reservations about his ability to supervise a staff of seven, some of whom were older than him. However, I was very impressed by him and decided to hold the job until he had a chance to discuss the offer with his wife. Two days later, Wayne and his wife Marge walked into the camp office and accepted the job as head cook. This was a great day for Camp Warren. Not only was Wayne an excellent cook, he had the kind of even disposition which made him popular not only with the food service staff, but with the campers and counselors as well. He was also interested in the camp programs and when time allowed participated in camp activities. He was one of the few head cooks who was willing to adjust the food service schedule to the program schedule, which proved to be advantageous for the camp. Wayne continued as head cook for many years and headed Camp Warren’s food service office. He and his staff were the first people to bake all the bread for the camp. There is nothing like bread fresh from the oven. If camp food is good enough, staff can make mistakes and still maintain positive morale.

After we built four cabins in Family Camp, it became easier to hire family men because their wives would have the companionship and friendship of the other women while their husbands spent long hours at the main camp.

HOMAJI

During one of our periodic inspections, a situation that caused a great deal of concern was discovered in Homaji. I do not believe I’ve ever explained how it and the lake between Half Moon and Pleasant were named Homaji: In the woods close to Homaji Lake someone had constructed a marker of crossed sticks. It was rumored that

it marked the grave of Chief Homaji, and all the campers just assumed Homaji was a Native American name. In truth, the name Homaji was invented by the Warren family. It was an acronym of the first letters of the first names of everyone in their family. Returning to what the inspection uncovered, the big log supports that were set directly into the earth had rotted at the point of contact. One of the contractors later told us that it was lucky Warren was a Christian organization because the only thing holding up the huge structure were sky hooks. If the problem had continued undiscovered, the building might have become useless. In order to repair the problem, we needed to either set the cedar supports on concrete or construct concrete supports. We decided to do a major overhaul while we were doing this repair since there were badly needed facilities that could be housed in the basement. One of those things was a central washhouse: sinks, showers, toilets. There were already two small lavatories in the basement, which had a very low ceiling with one or two showerheads, so it should have been possible to pipe in hot water for when the weather was cold, or the lake was too cool for soap baths (the traditional method for keeping campers clean). We also wanted space for staff lockers for towels, bathing equipment, and other items it would be convenient to store in the central area of the camp. This was particularly useful when it came to towels and swimsuits for staff on duty as lifeguards, so they would no longer have to make the trek back to their cabin to change. We also wanted to construct an improved entrance to the building. This repair was quite an engineering feat as several feet of dirt had to be dug out and temporary supports created to hold the building up until the new supports were completed. We knew we would need a large disposal field for the sewage and wastewater coming from a facility used by all the male staff. The end result was excellent. In addition to making it safe for decades to come, the camp received valuable additional usage from the changes made to the building.

THE HEN HOUSE

As the camp became larger and we served more people, we realized we needed a more comfortable place for our non-cabin staff to live. Some of them lived upstairs in Homaji or in other empty rooms around camp. We decided we wanted one building and started thinking about and planning the features we wanted. Some irreverent staff members soon nicknamed the building, the “Hen House.” This building served as an important place in the life of the camp; it housed two office secretaries and a number of folks who worked in food service, the number varying from four to six. This building included a bathroom with a tub and shower, single bedrooms, and larger ones to serve as doubles. There was a nice living room and later a piano gifted to us found a home there. We also decided it was important to have a fireplace in the living room so that the hardworking staff members could enjoy the luxury of a crackling fire.

SENIOR SECTION

Over the years the clearing near the farm buildings had been used for many different purposes, some of which were incompatible. It was an athletic field, but was also used by the horses for formation riding and pasture. Problem was that the evidence of their presence wasn't consistent with maintaining a clean athletic field. Much to his shock and sorrow, a boy would occasionally mistake the evidence left behind for a base. The hooves of the horses also dug up the field which added to its natural unevenness. So, it was decided to level and reseed the field. Then it was fenced, barring the horses from using it. This was a big project but one that provided a much-improved athletic field.

The development of an adequate Senior Section was a project carried out over several years. The first new building was the McCarthy cabin, which was made possible by a memorial fund donated for this purpose by John McCarthy's widow. In addition to the substantial sum that came as a memorial, the family added enough money to complete the cabin. John McCarthy had been a long-time member of the Camp Warren Committee and one of the most committed and conscientious contributors to the committee's work. It seemed eminently fitting that the first new building in the Senior Section was made possible through his family and in his memory. After the cabin was completed, it became possible to tear down the old log cabin along with the small chicken coop that had for many years housed Senior campers. The buildings were old, in the wrong locations, and couldn't house an adequate number of Senior campers and staff.

The McCarthy cabin was completed in time for the summer of 1961 and was dedicated on July 16 of that year. Bob Chaney, the Camp Warren Committee chairman, spoke briefly about John and his contribution to Camp Warren. The architect, Paul Damberg, and contractor, Verner Brodeen, and his wife were also present. Mons Weum and Vern Radcliff of the YMCA general staff fastened in place the memorial plaque. Scott Pheonix, a camper, read a poem written by Dick Parks, a staff member, which caught the true spirit of camp. The McCarthy family attended the dedication. Staff members, Jim Christopherson and Doug Crane, were in charge of the arrangements and did a fine job.

After the cabin was built it became a coveted goal of older campers to live in McCarthy, which had been set aside for the oldest of the Senior campers. It became the model for the other two Senior cabins that were built later. The Senior Lodge (also known as the Silha Center) provided office and sleeping quarters for the head of the Senior camp. Once the other two cabins were built, the road to the caretaker's cabin was altered slightly so that it would not pass too close to one of the senior cabins. With the development of the new Senior unit, it became necessary to install a new toilet and wash bowls. We decided to build a different type of washroom than those in the Intermediate or Cub Sections. Since a low area was the natural location for the building, we thought it might be wiser to have a tank type toilet that could be pumped out from time to time. This change was made because of the constant problem with the flush toilets and the more difficult type of septic system necessary to dispose of human waste. Another motivation in installing non-flushing toilets was the hope we would eventually use some of the Senior Section buildings for fall, winter, and spring activities

when it would be an advantage to have toilet facilities that weren't dependent on running water.

CUB LODGE

Finally, it became necessary to tear down the old Cub Lodge and build a new one. This was a major construction job because we wanted to include several things in its design. We wanted a main room large enough so that all three camp sections would have enough room to gather there. At the same time, we wanted to make the rooms small enough so that the Cub campers would not feel lost in it. We also needed a space large enough for dramatics. Tommy Fuller, our camp nurse, had been taking care of the costumes in the Health Services building, but was running out of space for new costumes. She wanted a room with a lock next to the stage so she could keep track of the costumes and ensure they weren't borrowed without her approval. Since it was being built on a hill, we felt we should take advantage of the location by constructing a walk-out basement so cabin groups would be able to prepare their meals when the weather became inclement. The basement would also provide a meeting place for camp groups so they could plan and study their activities when they were not outside participating in them. These plans were suggested after consultation with the people who were most directly concerned with the operation of the program.

Dan Danielson, the experienced and effective head of the Cub Section; Ted Nelson who headed dramatics at that time; and assistant directors Mons Weum and Jack Edie all contributed to the planning. Don Setter, a member of the Camp Warren Committee and a senior partner at Setter, Leach and Lindstrom, Architects and Engineers, generously volunteered both his time and skills as well as his firm which drew up the plans and planned the final stages of the building. Architect, Paul Damberg of Virginia helped with many of the design and construction problems and supervised the construction. Dick Haij, our caretaker, also helped in many ways with the planning and construction. The excellent workmanship that went into the building was the result of the efforts of the Pesic Construction Company. Both Bill Pesic and Chuck Rogers were present at the building dedication which occurred July 15, 1962. Of course, many others also contributed their time, skill, and thoughts. Gifts were received from parents and other friends of camp, but the major portion of the work was financed by a loan to be repaid with interest.

An interesting side note—When we started planning the building, educated guesses about cost ran as high as $40,000. However, because of the careful planning and supervision, the building cost approximately $17,000. This was one of the few buildings built while I was director where the guesstimates proved to be higher than the actual cost. At the dedication, the building was presented to three groups of people: Ed Banner, a member of the Cub camp council; Dan Danielson, head of the Cub Section;

and Burt Pierson, a member of the Camp Warren committee from Virginia, Minnesota.

One of the most substantial gifts which made building the Cub possibly came as a memorial for Dr. John W. MacDonald. It seemed a very fitting memorial for Dr. MacDonald's family to fund the two beautiful fireplaces that were the central features for both the main and basement rooms.

EROSION

One of the real problems of group or mass living on any wildlife property is erosion. The treading of hundreds of feet over the same area time after time destroys ground cover and allows rain to wash the earth away. This is especially true, of course, where the ground is rolling or elevated. Camp Warren is fortunate in that much of its land is level ground. At the same time, there are some banks and we suddenly woke up to the fact that something would have to be done before many of the banks would be washed into Half Moon lake. We had always resented the idea of keeping active boys off the grass, so we did not confine walking or running to specific paths. When we finally took inventory, we found that a foot of Half Moon's bank between Homaji Lodge and the dining hall and heavily trodden by campers had practically no soil cover left. This was discussed in a staff meeting and the camper council. It was finally decided that, as much as we disliked the idea, we would have to confine traffic in high density areas to paths. We would also have to try and restore the ground cover and tier the paths in such a way that the runoff would be slowed down. Campers were very cooperative and year by year we made real gains. We planted some bushes and small trees in the worst areas and let nature take care of the rest. Of course, the kids would forget and it became very monotonous for the staff members to remind the kids about the erosion project since they tended to cut a straight line to their destination rather than taking a more roundabout route. Some sections of our big pines which had been downed in storms were cut up and used to make steps or borders for the paths. Enough progress was made so that we came to a definite conclusion: that if we were careful the problem could be stopped.

PEOPLE

GOOD NEIGHBORS

It goes without saying that a good relationship with our Camp Warren neighbors was extremely important. We were successful in developing good ones with some, but unfortunately failed with others. The local people could be suspicious of a camp from the cities. A lack of understanding of what a camp was and what it was attempting to do

could lead them to take a rather negative view of us. Since some of our neighbors were on the governing boards of the county township and city government, we naturally wanted them to be aware of the things the camp was organized to do. We began by inviting some of the community businessmen and neighbors to picnics we held at the camp. This helped a great deal because it gave us the opportunity to get to know each other a little better. At these meetings we tried to acquaint them with the camp programs and outlined the main philosophical principles behind the camp operation.

One of the difficulties of hosting these events was that almost all the invitees had lake cabins of their own. If we tried to schedule the affair on a weekend, we were competing with time at their own cabins. If we held it during the week, it was difficult for them to get away from work and difficult for our Camp Warren Committee members to travel up from the Cities. Since it was important for them to attend these get-togethers, many made the effort to do so. We also found that the local businessmen enjoyed mingling with the businessmen from Minneapolis, and this opportunity increased the likelihood of local presence. As we got to know one another, the camp became a beneficiary of many good turns by the local people. It is impossible to mention them all. However, one family on Long Lake made their sauna available to us for several years, including for our annual staff party. Some friends made financial contributions, and others who were able to help through government activity made their contributions in a very vital way. Monroe Shandling and Sam Phillips were among the Virginia businessmen who were good friends of the camp. Of course, the most important thing was to get along with our closest neighbors, the few who shared the same lake with the camp.

Neighbors who were loyal friends of the camp stand out in my mind. We decided early on that it would be very helpful to have residents of Eveleth and Virginia as members of the Camp Warren Management Committee. The first two were Burt Pearson, the editor of the Kassaba Daily News in Virginia, and Dr. Frank Kuchever of the East Range Clinic in Eveleth. Both men were very willing to help with the problems of operating the camp. Burt Pearson's pictures and stories about the camp were included in the paper, while Dr. Kuchever and his nephew worked with the camp medical program. They were often called for help at inconvenient times but were always willing to adjust their schedules. Paul Damberg was another who contributed to the success of camp. He was the senior member of a highly respected architectural firm in Virginia, and we depended a great deal on him for advice and help concerning maintenance problems as well as acting as the architect for some of our buildings. Paul was always willing to put in more time than he was paid for. It helped me a great deal to be able to have a man close to camp whose judgment was valued when making decisions about the camp buildings and property. Later, Paul's son and grandson were campers at Warren and his son served as a member of the camp board. I would also like to mention Elmer Slagal, who, for many years, was designated by the state board of heath to inspect Camp Warren. We looked on Elmer as more of a friend than an official inspector. We welcomed the time he gave to Warren because he was always willing to work through any problems and give us his ideas and advice in a way that benefited the camp.

HEADACHES

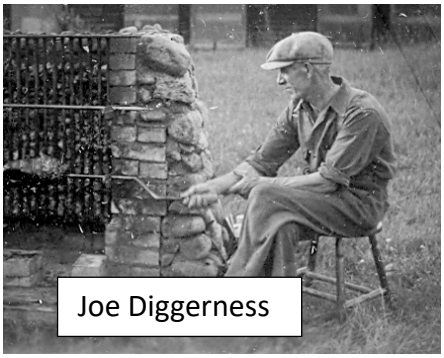
The resort at the end of Half Moon Lake caused problems with the operation of Camp Warren, and I am sure the presence of our camp caused problems for them. The resort, which started as a cabin camp or motel and is now called a resort, has been well run. Many parents have stayed there while visiting their sons. If we'd had the funds to purchase the small resort, it would have saved Camp Warren some very real problems. We had a feeling that when it was originally built, the owners might have thought that the camp would eventually buy them out at an above market price. Over the years, the camp considered doing this on two or three occasions. However, once the resort had been developed, the asking price was too much for our pockets, especially since Camp Warren needed additional buildings of its own. The resort was sold to one buyer after another. Some were friendlier and more cooperative than others. We discovered at one point that one of the resort buildings was several inches over the boundary on our side of the property. The owner signed a letter stating he was aware of this fact so that they couldn't later claim ownership of that strip of land. Being located on a small lake, there were times when speed boats and water skiing became part of the resort's activities. Naturally, the time and location for some of these activities didn't jibe with the camp schedule. However, I am also sure that our boys, canoes, and rowboats destroyed the peace and quiet that some of the fishermen at the resort were hoping for. There was a small store connected with the resort, and some campers would leave our property without permission to buy candy and cigarettes. Some owners were more cooperative than others in alerting us to this traffic.

One major point revolved around the planting of some trees along the highway. When the freeway was built, the road was moved closer to the lake by filling in a few feet to provide an exit. To provide a better view for the auto traffic on the highway, a group of poplars at the end of the lake were cut down, destroying the screen between the camp and the traffic and removing a barrier to the noise. The camp committee realized that the noise of the increased semi traffic would reduce the sense of isolation and wilderness that had been a part of the early camp. They wondered if the resort might be willing to plant trees in the space between the water and the highway's edge. Leonard Lindborg, a committee member who knew the highway engineer in Duluth, discussed this possibility with him. The highway engineer was in favor of the idea, and we were elated when he said he'd plant two or three groups of trees along the highway in the fall. The following spring on one of my first trips to camp, I stopped at the resort to ask if I could use their telephone, only to find myself almost physically ejected from the office. He asked if we'd had anything to do with the planted trees. When I told him we had suggested the idea to the highway department, he went off on a rant, telling me that they hid his sign, prevented a view of his place from the highway, and he was not going to tolerate it. In fact, he said he was going to see that the trees were killed. Before leaving in haste, I advised him not to do anything to kill the trees since that would get him into legal trouble and that there had to be a way to work this out peacefully. Understandably, our relationship began to deteriorate. One day, the highway engineers from Duluth stopped in at the camp and took me to the highway to show me something. Once we were there, he picked up some soil dotted with white particles. They had been

added to the soil to kill the trees. As a result, the screen of trees died, and the highway department was reluctant to make any other attempts to screen the camp from the highway. Obviously, Camp Warren would be much better off if it owned those few acres of property.

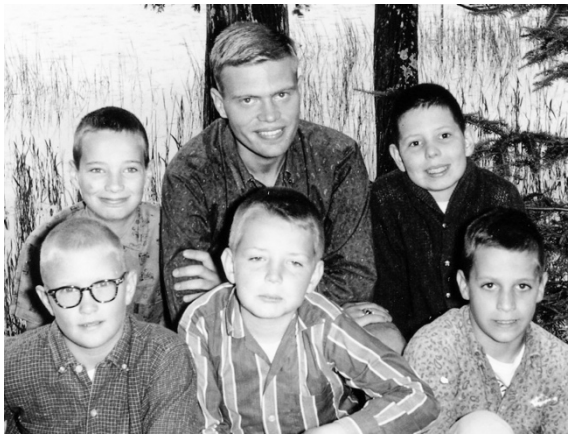
CAMP CARETAKERS

Over the years, the various camp caretakers have made enormous contributions to the camp's physical plant. I have already mentioned Joe Diggerness and his many fine accomplishments. Richard Haij was another long-term caretaker whose advice about the camp buildings and property was always worth listening to. His contributions regarding construction were also of great value. One of the problems I never resolved to my own satisfaction was how to supervise a man who worked on a property some two hundred miles from the head office. I never knew for sure if I was fair in my outline of work that needed to be done, since the very act of living in such rustic surroundings took a great deal of the caretaker's time. I visited the camp every four to six weeks in the off season. I tried many stratagems to find out how much a caretaker could accomplish in terms of repairs, maintenance, upkeep, etc. One of those schemes was having them write a weekly written report. This was some help, but most caretakers, being more doers than writers, didn't like to write reports. Consequently, I was always uncertain as to the amount of work I could expect a caretaker to accomplish. To this day, I am uncertain of how fair I ended up being.


Joe Diggerness

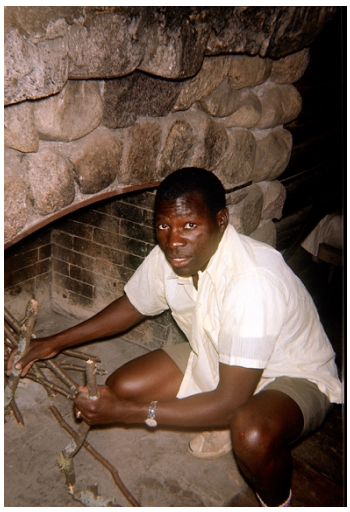
STAFF STANDOUTS

Dan Danielson was a staff stand out. He began as a very effective counselor in the Cub Section, so effective he later became the head of that section and continued in that job for a number of summers. Dan always gave 110% to his job. One problem we kidded him about was the frequent refusal of the Cub Kybo to work properly. This never fazed Dan. He was often seen digging roots out of the system or using a snake to clean out other stoppages, making it possible for his Cubbies to take care of their daily hygiene needs. And, thus, Dan reluctantly became an expert in sanitary engineering. Upon graduation from college, Dan became a teacher at Blake school in Minneapolis and continued his substantial contributions to Camp Warren as a member of the Camp Warren board and chairman of the program committee.



Ted Nelson was one of our most effective directors of horseback riding and contributed in many other ways around the camp. Camp meant a lot to Ted and he meant a lot to the camp. In addition to his expert handling of the horseback riding program, his relationships with the campers were on a timely and helpful basis. Were it not for necessary family obligations, I believe Ted might have continued for a longer span on the Camp Warren staff. He became an expert in the field of outdoor education in Minnesota and was consulted frequently by schools planning to expand their programs in that area.

Trywell Nyirongo came from Malawi and was another counselor who felt that Camp Warren was almost his second home. He came to Minnesota to complete high school before going on to college. His sole goal was returning to Africa as a doctor. While completing his education, he returned to Camp Warren every summer as a staff member. The fact that he was from Africa broadened the horizons of our campers. The summer after he graduated from college, he applied to several medical schools in the U.S. and Canada. One by one, he received rejections from all of them. This was largely because his unfamiliarity with English made it difficult for him to master his college subjects and, thus, didn't allow him to meet medical school entry requirements. This discouraged him because he had never given up on his goal of becoming a doctor. I wrote him that spring to see if he was coming back to camp. He declined, explaining that since his future was somewhat uncertain, he needed to be free during the summer to make decisions about his next steps. The next day I received a telegram from Trywell saying I should disregard what he had told me and that regardless of his situation, he was going to come back to Camp Warren because it meant so much to him. Trywell never gave up hope and finished medical school in Asia and Europe. He did his internship and residency in the U.S. and is now practicing in Africa. I don't think the campers could have experienced a finer example of determination and persistence than Trywell's.



A camper who went on to leadership positions with Camp Warren is the present camp director, John Howard. While John never had a long span as a Warren camper, he did have a long span as a member of the staff. Starting as a counselor, he held many important positions at camp. A position he excelled at was heading up the sailing program. His enthusiasm and interest in sailing caught on with his campers. As a result, sailing became one of the most popular program activities at Warren. John later

became head of the Senior Section and then assistant director in charge of programming. Fortunately for Camp Warren, when Bob Telleen, my immediate successor, announced his resignation, John was available and eagerly accepted the challenge of the Camp Warren Directorship. His earlier contacts with Camp Warren as a camper and staff member provided him with the understanding necessary to maintain the excellent reputation that Camp Warren possesses. His own self-confidence plus his work with me over several years provided him with the ability of not being threatened by a camp director of some thirty-five-year tenure which I appreciated very much. He has drawn me into the life of Camp Warren, his invitations to visit camp providing me a continuing interest in the camp, my second home.

CAMP SERVICES

HEALTH SERVICES

Originally, the camp's infirmary was on the second floor of Homaji, but with the increased number of campers, it eventually proved inadequate. It was decided to build a separate building to act as a residence for the camp nurse and a place where ailing campers could be confined and, if necessary, isolated. The plans were discussed for some time, but health services was finally opened and dedicated in the summer of 1941. It proved to be a very worthwhile addition to camp.

At this time, the campers included a number of boys whose fathers were doctors at the Mayo Clinic. Some helped raise the necessary funds for the health services building. Other funds were raised from parents and friends of the camp. After ideas had been gathered from all interested parties, sample plans were drawn. In my opinion, this was the building that had the fewest mistakes and would have been built to the same specifications after several years of use. Even though most camps refer to this building as the infirmary, we named it health services. This was done to put the emphasis on good health and prevention of illness. Because prevention was so important in the camp community, it was our practice, when possible, to hire not only a RN as camp nurse, but an RN who was qualified in Public Health.

The building would also be a log structure with a fireplace. The small room with a fireplace would be handy for the nurse when she was doing her

Lillian “Tommy” Fuller

paperwork or as a place to move a sick boy. Looking at the building today, it may seem larger than necessary. This was not the case in the camp’s early days. Back then there were neither wonder drugs nor inoculations in present day quantities. Therefore, boys with temperatures would be kept in health services for a longer period of time.

During my first year as director, I had an unpleasant experience that underlined the importance of having an adequately sized health service facility. Shortly after camp began, one of the boys came down with the mumps. We gathered information about this contagious disease. There were several times we hoped we had the disease stopped, but its long exposure period repeatedly fooled us. We tried to remove campers early on so they wouldn’t have a chance to expose other campers. To do this, we checked temperatures twice a day for the boys who’d been exposed to the mumps. However, in every case, the sick child had already passed it on to someone else before we could isolate him from the other campers and staff. We didn’t want to keep those suffering from mumps in health services as that would expose campers who were there for reasons unrelated to the mumps virus. We eventually asked the caretaker and his family if they would be willing to be housed elsewhere so their home could be turned into a mumpery. We hired a second nurse to stay with the boys diagnosed with mumps. During the summer, we had about eleven cases of mumps, three of which were counselors. We were concerned about all the patients but knew that it could be so much worse for adults. When we attempted to investigate the origins of the outbreak, we were told by neighbors of the first victim that one of his parents had mentioned that the boy had been exposed to mumps but thought camp would be a nice place for him to recuperate if he came down with it. This resulted in another practice we adopted the following year. Parents had to sign a statement that, to their knowledge, their son had not been exposed to any contagious illnesses, and if he was right before leaving for camp, they would notify the Camp Warren office. We checked these cards very carefully, which, I’m sure, saved the camp from exposure to contagious illnesses. As medical treatments have evolved since camp opened, they are probably no longer necessary. That first year was quite an introduction to camp life. In addition to the mumps outbreak, I also lost the services of three highly important staff members for an extended period.

FOOD SERVICES

One of the most important components of camp life is the kind of food served in the dining hall. Over the years, Camp Warren has been fortunate to have some outstanding people in the food service department. In the early years, Mrs. Emma Schultz was not only a tremendous person to have in charge of the food service operation, but she also became a kind of camp mother. Many are the legends that grew around Mrs. Schultz and her cooks. Perhaps the most notable was her famous apple dumplings. She would get up at five a.m. to bake these individual dumplings topped with a spoon of hard sauce. We were indeed in for a taste treat. Campers who were leaving on a canoe trip or an overnight hike on apple-dumpling day frequently asked Mrs. Schultz to save their apple dumplings until they returned. It was not unusual for me to receive calls in the fall from mothers whose sons had requested they obtain Mrs. Schultz's recipe.

During World War II, it was very difficult to find cooks. In mid-summer one year, one of the cooks found it necessary to leave because of poor health. After much effort on my part, I was given the name of a high school teacher in Eveleth who was an excellent cook. I drove to Eveleth to see if John Miller might be willing to help us out for the rest of that summer. He not only accepted the position but continued to be the head cook for several summers. He still maintains an interest in the camp and drops in from time to time from his home in Eveleth.

Another year I was desperate for a head cook without any prospects at all. When it came time to leave for camp, I couldn't delay any longer because there were numerous things that needed to be done at the camp. Mrs. John Pemberton, the wife of a prominent Mayo Clinic physician and mother of four Warren campers, agreed to contact as many candidates as possible around Rochester to find a satisfactory head cook. She called me at the camp with contact information for a suitable candidate. Clara was a fine person and a fine cook who helped us for more than that one season.

Mass feedings are always a difficult proposition and can be a real problem for camps. An additional problem for camps that most restaurants don't have is that the people who eat in their dining halls live together for long periods of time, so if the food is spoiled in any way, it is quite clear where it was obtained. I have always felt that restaurants were fortunate because the people who ate in them spread out in every direction throughout the city. If someone got sick, it was attributed to the flu or something of that nature. Over the many years of Camp Warren history, tainted food managed to cause problems a couple of times. One warning sign that such a problem existed was the slamming of the kybo doors all night long. This happened on one

particular occasion, but only in the Cub camp. This, in itself, was a puzzle. Presumably, all the campers and staff ate the same food at the same time from the same menu and prepared in the same kitchen. We naturally were anxious to find the cause of the problem. Fortunately, the next day when everyone was checked by the nurse, we found that there was nothing serious going on. No temperatures were in evidence and by then the boys' elimination processes had stabilized. However, we thought that in the interest of protecting the boys in the future, we needed to find out what had caused the problem. I called the state board of health office in Minneapolis, and they sent their food detection specialist. He worked with our head chef but could find no answer to the problem. Just when we began to feel we might never know the answer, the man from the state board of health finally discovered that the cook had had a small amount of leftover gravy which he had warmed up and served to the Cubs. There had not been enough to serve in the other two dining halls. This had to be the cause, and we learned from this experience how to better use leftover food.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation was a vital part of the camp's program. In the first place, getting the campers to a camp two hundred miles from Minneapolis was a problem. Also, many of our campers came from outside of the Twin Cities, and this increased in numbers over the years. This also meant meeting various trains and planes for out of state campers. Since we believed there was great value in overnight camping, it was necessary to transport campers to put in and take out locations. At times it was necessary for the director's car to carry the overflow of those who could be accommodated in the camp's station wagon. Most canoe trips started with a station wagon carrying the campers and towing a trailer carrying the canoes and packs. For many years, I had a hitch put on each of my cars so that I would be able to pull the trailer that hauled extra luggage as well as any extra campers. As the number of campers increased, it became necessary to use a larger and more rugged vehicle, so we substituted small buses for the vans. Many Camp Warren family members will remember the first small bus we owned called the "Orange Aid," well named both for its color and purpose. This first non-station wagon vehicle was a combination of standard equipment plus our own individual requirements. We had the smallest bus they manufactured so there would be sufficient leg room for our large Seniors and counselors. The best method of getting the campers to camp had to be learned through experience. School buses were cheaper than Greyhound buses, but we found the additional amount of money was worth it after a few of the school buses developed mechanical problems enroute. This could, of course, happen with any vehicle, but Greyhound, who ran a regular schedule in the Warren area, was able to quickly replace a bus if one ran into difficulty. Mileage was greater in the early years because there were no freeways and roads were in poorer shape. One of the tasks I disliked the most occurred when I was a part-time counselor. It was my job when in town to meet returning buses at the Minneapolis YMCA, and I can still recall some harrowing experiences. At that time, we were still loading baggage both on top of the bus and in the cargo

hold. Many times the load was too heavy for the equipment. I will never forget one Saturday when I opened the lobby of the downtown YMCA at about 3:00 in the afternoon to prepare for parents to meet their campers at the 4:00 to 5:00 p.m. scheduled arrival time. It was 11:00 p.m. before the buses arrived. During the interminable wait, I received telephone calls from the buses along the route, explaining blowouts and the other problems holding them up. I would call for quiet and report the latest update to the waiting parents, some of whom had fallen asleep in chairs in the lobby. You can imagine the kind of reception my announcements received. You can also imagine the irate parents and the testy comments aimed at yours truly about the inefficiency of the camp's transportation. I did my best to sooth them, but my attempts were usually of little avail. As a result of some of these experiences, we adopted the practice of renting baggage trucks, which improved the transport greatly. Not only did it prevent buses from being delayed because they were overloaded, but it also allowed us to get the transportation off more promptly as the parents dropping off their children would store the luggage right into the baggage trucks. These would then be dispatched even before the buses left. Prompt arrival at camp was also important. As there would be a lot less homesickness if the boys arrived in time to participate in some camp activity during daylight hours, make their beds, and settle in before dark.

THE CORE OF CAMP: PROGRAMS

PROGRAMS

Next, I would like to turn to the area of programming and recount our philosophy. There are a number of things that stand out in my memory. The very first thing was going out on the trail for overnight camping, one of the most important things a camp located near the Boundary Waters Canoe Area could furnish. We offered a graduated system of overnight camping experiences with the older boys getting a longer and more rugged experience. Early study proved to us that it costs more to have boys on the trail than to serve them at the camp base. However, this did not conflict with our desire to put them on the trail for the benefits gained from an overnight camping experience. Much depended on the counselors in charge of these trips. If they liked tripping and wanted to go out with the boys, they would often be the touchstones of growth values on the part of the campers. If, however, they were not campers themselves and only went through the motions, the boys would not gain as much from the camping experience. There was also, of course, a hazard or risk on overnight trips as there is with all camping experiences, but this risk was

minimal if the counselor in charge was mature, used good judgment, and followed the necessary guidelines.

Some camps took the position that the whole camping experience should be rugged. Our position was that simple cabins and good food at the home base were important. This was particularly true since the boys were with us for four to eight weeks. When we were building a new Senior Section, we discussed with the campers as well as the staff whether to make a more primitive tent camp with the boys being responsible for most of their meals. This idea was discarded after listening to the boys. They feared that living in tents and cooking their own meals at the camp base would take away from the adventure of the Boundary Water canoe trips.

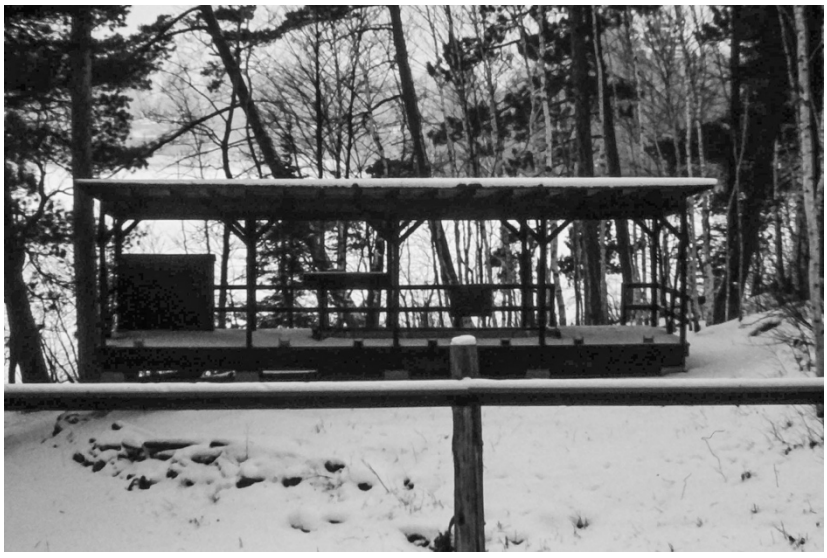
It was always a great relief to the camp director when a canoe trip or overnight hiking experience returned to camp with everyone well and healthy. Of course, there were always concerns and worries. I can still remember a situation that caused a great deal of concern. We were in the midst of a thunderstorm when I got a call. A group of Seniors was out with a very fine counselor, Paul Egeland. There was so much static on the line that it was very difficult to hear the other person. I was able to gather that the person on the line was Paul and that he was calling from Ely. According to the route they'd planned, he should have been several lakes away from Ely at that point. Before I could get more information, the phone went dead. Naturally, we were greatly concerned, and I decided to drive to Ely to find out what had caused the change of plans. Just as I was about to leave, the phone rang again, and I found out that Paul had come into Ely with a boy who was ill and had taken him to the hospital, leaving the assistant counselor in charge of the rest of the group. The boy's condition was not critical. We were relieved to receive this additional information, but, for a few minutes, we had suffered real concern.

EARLY FIELD TRIPS

Since it was a long-term camp, it gave us the opportunity to visit interesting and educational places in the camp's general location. Among these places of interest were the iron mines of the Mesabi Range; the high school at Hibbing which had been built at the time when iron mining taxes made possible its elaborate construction; sawmills and forestry headquarters in the early years of the camp; and the largest white pine sawmill in the world, which was still operating in Virginia. Also, J. S. Steel Corporation was very helpful in providing leadership and facilities for our campers and staff, not only to see the open pit mines, but also to be taken down into them on a railroad car. There was, in addition, an underground mine still operating in Eveleth, and for a few years, small groups from the camp were allowed to visit it. Later, the taconite mines became an object of interest and education for the campers. Most of these places were visited with the aid of chartered Greyhound buses, along with the vehicles which the camp maintained for necessary trips to town and other purposes. For many years, when the camp was reasonably small, station wagons were maintained as the camp's official vehicle.

RIFLE RANGE

Another memorial that was a great addition to camp was the rebuilding and reconstruction of the rifle range in its original location across Half Moon Lake from the main camp. The original range had become too small for the additional number of campers as the Senior Section and the older Cubs were added to those who wanted to shoot. This reconstruction was done as a memorial to Kingsley Ervin, longtime chairman of the Camp Warren Committee.



At the time we rebuilt the range there was a good deal of discussion on whether it should be constructed across the lake, but we eventually decided that would be the best place for it. It did create a time problem for the staff who ran the program as well as the boys in returning to the camp in time for their next activity. On the other hand,

since we knew it was across the lake the only people over there were those who were shooting. In addition, there was a hill that provided a fine backstop for the range. These two features made for added safety. The noise of the rifles was also not as disturbing as it would have been if the range were closer to the other camp activities.

INDIAN CIRCLE (NOW KNOWN AS SCOTTY PINES)

Late one summer towards the end of my period as camp director, Lloyd McBurney called me and asked how long I would be there. The camping periods were over and I was in the process of making my final inspection, packing things up, and going over work jobs with the caretaker. When I told Lloyd I would still be at camp for several days, he asked if he and his wife could come up to discuss something with me. We set a time and he and his wife drove up. I knew them well and their two boys had been campers. They opened the conversation by telling me that it had been about ten years since their older boy, Scott, had died in an auto accident while he was serving in Germany. Since then, there had been many suggestions made to them about appropriate memorials.

This would be especially true since Lloyd had been for some time president of the Minneapolis YMCA. He told me they hadn't done anything about the memorial because they wanted to make sure about what they wanted. So, they had just waited, but recently they had become convinced that there was no place like Camp Warren, and that is where they wanted to have the memorial for Scott. We agreed that occasionally I would send them lists of things that the camp needed which could not be done within the framework of the regular budget. I did this, and they contacted me after receiving one of the lists and asked for more information about a permanent campfire set-up in Indian Circle. This was one of the most beautiful places at camp. Seven large white pines were the framework for the circle. In memory of Scott McBurney we placed some rustic benches in a circle under those seven majestic white pines.

TRADITIONS FROM OTHER CAMPS

One tradition that came from another Minneapolis YMCA camp was the designation of the toilet buildings at camp as kybos. Many people have wondered what that word stands for. It was an acronym for “Keep your bowels open.”

Another tradition that was also carried over from other Y camps and proved to be a great boon to Camp Warren was the adoption of the service or work hour which had been prevalent at other camps. Many boys who came to Warren from other camps accepted this part of the program and just assumed a service or work hour would be part of the daily program. They accepted this part of the program which proved to be a fine addition. I can remember a father whose boys had attended a very fine, high-grade camp, telling me that his sons griped a bit about having to do some work. Yet they still felt Camp Warren was more their camp than the other one they’d attended because they’d invested some of themselves into it.

A director of a very fine private camp was so impressed with Warren’s service hour that he got all the details of this program from me and tried to install it in his own camp the following summer. When I asked him how it went, he admitted it hadn’t taken hold and that they’d had to give it up. Their campers couldn’t see why they should pay their fees and then still be expected to go out and work. There were many values in the service hour program: The campers tended to take better care of the physical equipment around the camp because of the effort they put in taking care of it during the service hour. Many of the jobs were the kind the campers had never experienced, but they became more acquainted with how tennis courts were cared for, how a garden was developed, and the importance of keeping places clean. I don’t for a minute maintain there wasn’t griping about service hour and attempts on part of some campers to get by with as little effort as possible. Much of the attitude of the boys toward service hour depended on the counselors who oversaw each part of the program. Many of the boys weren’t assigned chores in their own families simply because there were no family chores in the modern household at their skill level. Camp provided a natural opportunity for the boys to learn how to do their share of the necessary tasks.

A third tradition that came from YMCA Camp Icaghowan was the camp newsletter, a humorous paper that was read at weekly evening campfire programs. The effectiveness of this newspaper depended again upon whether we had the right counselor to take charge of it, a counselor (Ken Lippin comes to mind) with a good sense of humor so that the newspaper would be an interesting facet of the program. The newspaper carried news of the camp, but often this was dressed up in humorous fashion.

WHY AN ALUMACRAFT CANOE?

I would like to take a moment to tell a little story about why the aluminum canoe made by Alumacraft, affectionately nicknamed the barge, has been used at camp for so many years. One winter, when I was going to the American Camping Association convention in New York, I wrote Jim Roddy to find out if he would be able to visit with me while I was in town. I arranged to take Jim and his fiancé to dinner and a play. Jim wanted to see the exhibits at the camping convention. One of which contained a promotion for cereal using an Alumacraft canoe, stuffed full of individual boxes of cereal. I passed by the exhibit a few times but ignored the contest. The person who guessed closest to the number of cereal boxes in the canoe would win, and the second closest would get all the cereal. Since I had never been particularly lucky with such contests as well as a tad lazy about figuring out the number, I passed it by. But Jim suggested we make guess. While he was carefully estimating, I just pulled a number out of my head and jotted it down. On the last day of the convention, I was surprised to hear my name paged over the loudspeaker, asking me to report to the Alumacraft booth. I began to wonder if I had won all the cereal boxes and, if so, how I would get them home. However, I found my guess was the closest and I had won the canoe. When they asked what I wanted done with it, I asked them to ship it to Camp Warren where it has been ever since.

OTHER CAMP DENIZENS

WILDLIFE

I have many memories of animals, both domestic and wild and their relationship with camp. On the wild side, we knew there were moose in the area because footprints had been seen and occasionally staff members or the caretaker would catch a fleeting glimpse of one. Although I had been there more years than most, I was never lucky enough to spot a moose on camp property. This changed one morning before reveille when I was at my desk, trying to get some work done before people were up and wanted to talk about the usual myriad of things. Suddenly I heard shoes pounding up the steps to my office. My first thought, of course, was wondering what had gone wrong now. Dan Danielson hurried into the room and told me to put my glasses on and hurry to the boat dock because a moose was swimming across Half Moon Lake. I had a fine view of the animal as it completed its swim, climbed out on the shore near Intermediate Cabin 6, and began to leisurely browse on some of the young trees that hung over the water before disappearing into the woods. A few moments later, reveille blew, and I thought how unfortunate it was that the campers did not have a chance to see this magnificent animal. However, as the boys gathered around the Intermediate flagpole, the moose appeared out of the woods and again started browsing along the shoreline. We called the campers attention to the moose and a large number of them got a good view of it. Other moose were occasionally seen. One Sunday afternoon, a cabin group was paddling across Back Bay, returning from their Sunday cookout, and they all had a chance to see a moose standing in the shallows and munching on aquatic plants. On another occasion, Jim Roppe, a staff member, saw a moose come out of the woods as he was driving to Minneapolis and observed him from the side of the road.


Dick Haij

Deer were frequent visitors, and many campers had a chance to see them. In the early years of the camp, our game warden would often bring fawns to the camp. We had a fenced-in pen where we could keep them. The warden felt it was better for a general service organization such as ours to take care of these fawns rather than individual families. Sometimes families would find them in the woods, not realizing the mother was probably close at hand, and bring them to the game warden. These fawns would become very tame from their time at camp. In later years, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources felt it best not to bring fawns to camp. They decided it was better to place orphaned fawns in a zoo where they would

be safe despite their lack of fear of humans. I can still remember picking berries in the camp garden while one of the older deer went down the same path, helping me pick. She was less fastidious than I was and would take both raspberries and leaves.

It wasn't unusual to see bears on Camp Warren property. The most exciting occasion occurred during World War II. At the start of one of the camp seasons a bear made himself at home on the camp property. Garbage cans were dumped over, but the visitor made himself less welcome by interfering with the camp livestock.

Food was scarce during the war, so to supplement our meat rations we decided to raise sheep around the athletic field. They were allowed to run loose, and we did manage to get a number of lambs, some of which were barbecued. I can still remember Mons Weum stitching the stomach cavity closed with wire and heavy cord after filling it with dressing. The lamb was turned slowly on a spit and was a delicious meal served to the whole camp.

A full-grown sheep became the victim of the bear I mentioned above. Since no other serious incident happened during the summer except for visits from the bear, we did not worry further. We didn't begrudge the animal his garbage ration, but thought he might have shown more gratitude and at the very least clean up his mess after dumping over the garbage cans.

However, during the special period when there were only about 15 campers on site, we decided it was time to act. Since bears were protected at that time, any and all actions had to be taken by the game warden. We asked him to come out and take care of our visitor because he was interfering with normal camp life. They agreed to act, so we explained at the dinner table that night why we wanted the campers to stay away from the garbage dump where the bear had appeared for the last several evenings.

I was out on the lake fishing with one of the campers when I heard shots being fired. The whole camp headed up toward the athletic fields and the garbage dump. When I arrived, we found the bear stretched out on the grass surrounded by a crowd of very excited campers. One of the boys, Steve Barrett, was from London, sent over to stay with relatives to escape the German bombing. His relatives had sent him to Camp Warren, and he was especially interested in the bear. The boys talked about using the hide as a rug and were willing to chip in to make that possible. The warden said the carcass was the property of the state and was usually put up for bid. However, in our case he let us purchase it for a couple of dollars.

We sent the hide to the packing house in Eveleth. The campers were eager to try eating some of the animal. We brought back some roasts, steaks, and liver while the packing house sent us the hide along with various cuts of meat and the head. We wrote to a taxidermist in Duluth who said the hide was not a good candidate for tanning since at that time of year it wouldn't be in prime condition. We did send the head down to them where it was mounted and still hangs on a wall at Camp Warren. Our cook was very cooperative and prepared bear steaks and roasts. They were pretty tough, and no one found them all that enjoyable. However, those of us who like liver had a real feast since, contrary to expectations, the liver was mild and very tasty. We enjoyed it a lot. We took several photos of boys standing around the bear's carcass, including the camper from London.

At one point in the early years, there was a colony of beaver on Homaji Lake. Beaver are fascinating animals. They were ambitious engineers and built a dam where

the creek from Homaji lake flowed into Pleasant Lake. Their engineering feat was so effective that it began to back up the lake along its shoreline where it began drowning out some of the huge pines by submerging their bases.

Bill Parker was the director at that time. Each morning he sent a crew of boys along with a counselor to tear down the dam so the water would run out more freely. However, beaver are persistent creatures, and each night they would rebuild it. Finally, they became discouraged, and the water in the lake returned to its normal level.

Homaji Lake was interesting in the variety of its wildlife. For several years a family of otters lived there, and it was not unusual for campers and a counselor to canoe over there in the evening. The otters were curious creatures and would often surface beside the still canoe, swim alongside it, studying one side and then the other.

There was always a family of loons nesting on Half Moon Lake. They were particularly interesting to campers from areas where loons were often not seen or its strange call heard. Those who watched the lake closely would often see a mother loon swim by with one or both of her young riding on her back. One year while Dr. W.J. Breckenridge, director of the Natural History Museum at the University of Minnesota, spent several days at camp, he went down to the shore of Half Moon Lake where one of the loons made a regular appearance. At that time, he was working on a loon painting that needed a little more work. He wanted to be sure he was accurately capturing the details of the handsome bird. Camp Warren was very pleased when the state legislature designated the loon as the state bird.

Ruffed Grouse or partridge were prevalent around camp in its early years. However, as the forest matured, the birds found it less desirable and were no longer a common sight. Ruffed Grouse have now returned to camp. We also had an opportunity to taste them even when they were not in season. On a few occasions a partridge would break its neck flying into the tennis court netting. We felt it a shame to waste the meat, so we cleaned and cooked it, serving it to the favorite few who got the chance to sample it. Once while returning from dropping off some boys at the White Face Reservoir for a canoe trip, I was driving down a narrow forest road when I had to make a 90 degree turn and noticed a bird standing in the road. I pulled to one side to avoid it, but the bird went in the same direction. He was dead when I got out to pick him up, so I took him back to camp where he became a very tasty treat.

HORSES

With so many gates around camp, it became a real problem to prevent the horses from getting out. Once the camp received a call that an overnight horse trip must have lost its horses because they were all munching away on the grass and flowers in the caller’s front yard. Another time, an irate farmer visited camp to complain that our horses had trampled his garden patch, destroying his vegetables.

I think this is a good time to note that neither I nor John Howard felt at home around horses. Neither of us had participated in horseback riding to any substantial

degree. I would occasionally take a ride during special periods so that the campers could poke fun at my riding ability. However, once when camp was over, and I was the only one around, an incident occurred during which I went from fearful to proud and became worthy of the title, horseman. One day just at dusk, I heard what sounded like wire crackling over by the garden. When I went to investigate, I found our horse, Chief, with his right hoof caught in the wire netting of the garden fence. He'd gotten greedy and reached too far into the garden for a mouthful of tasty greens. After examining his hoof, I discovered a wire had worked its way between his shoe and his hoof. After retrieving several tools, I managed to free him, and Chief trotted off to join the other horses.

There was also the year we decided there might be a benefit to having a colt born shortly before camp started, so the campers could enjoy watching its development. At about the right time, we bought a pregnant mare, and a colt was born that spring, The campers arrived to discover an awkward, long-legged foal following his mother around. Since we only kept a few horses, we hoped we could still use the mother for riding purposes. Thankfully, everything worked out fine. The colt would follow his mother as she joined the other horses in camper rides around the ring. We only kept the colt for a year because it would have been very expensive to keep him until he was old enough to be a reliable saddle horse

BEES

Domestic animals helped make life at camp interesting for the campers. When I was on staff before becoming director, a fellow counselor, Ed Nyles, took a course at the University of Minnesota in beekeeping. He suggested to Bill Parker that it might be interesting to keep two or three hives at camp because the bees were, themselves, such fascinating creatures. Bill provided the necessary money from the budget to purchase them and the supplies to work with them. For two or three years, Ed Nyles took care of the bees on his own since no one else at camp had shown any interest. But as so often happens with staff members, Ed graduated and took a full time, year around job.

What happened to the bees? The caretaker swore he would have nothing to do with them, and there was no one else at camp with any beekeeping experience. In a burst of youthful enthusiasm, I foolishly volunteered. I tried to secure enough books and pamphlets to learn something about handling bees. I soon discovered I was not by nature a good bee man as I moved too quickly and was often on the receiving end of stings. I did, however, manage to look like a professional beekeeper as I had the smoker, veil and gloves.

One day I decided to try something I'd read about in the literature…that a beekeeper the bees were used to could quietly go through a hive without the protection of veil and gloves. I decided to give this a try even though I had some reservations. My reservations should have been even greater because I managed to crush a bee while examining a frame and immediately found myself being swarmed. I took off across the athletic field, breaking all existing speed records. However, it turned out I wasn't as fast as the bees and managed to get stung six or seven times on the face, resulting in one of my eyes swelling completely shut while the other was just a slit. I was a marked man around camp and was the recipient of endless humorous remarks.

Despite all my reading on the subject, there were times I wished I knew an experienced beekeeper who could answer my questions. One day I heard about a man who had over 100 beehives and lived just seven miles south of camp on the highway toward Duluth. I made a list of various things that puzzled me and headed down the highway. When I got there, I was in for a rude shock. The man was pleasant enough but could neither hear nor talk. I tried to jot down questions on a sheet of paper and then waited for his answers. This didn't prove very satisfactory, and I never got a chance to work with a knowledgeable beekeeper. This probably explains why I never managed to produce enough honeycomb for the campers to enjoy. Some years the bees swarmed just when the hive community should have been at its strongest, and I didn't know how to prevent the development of new queen cells.

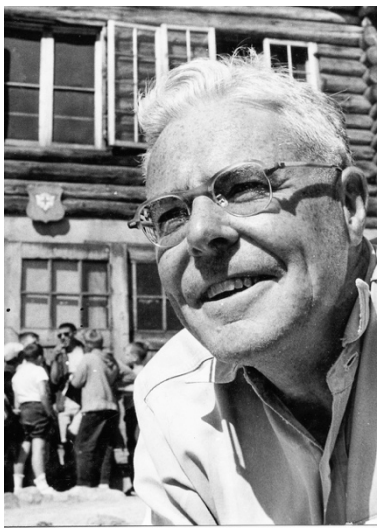
Comb honey is the most difficult to produce because the combs have to be rounded off and the cells capped if you wanted it to look attractive. The one year I produced honeycomb, a single hive furnished over 100 pounds, and I was able to put some honey on every table in the camp dining rooms. Although it was delicious, it was the only commercial success during my short beekeeping career, The camp eventually gave up beekeeping because bees in northern climates have to be wintered over in insulated, double-walled hives. In addition, someone needed to be at camp in the early spring to remove the insulated blocks.

THE LIFE OF A CAMP DIRECTOR

WHAT DOES A CAMP DIRECTOR DO?

On January 10, 1962, Stoney Koehler gave a talk entitled, “The Role of Camping in the Total YMCA Program.” With all modesty I can quote from this talk because his statement didn’t apply to me. I was chosen for this job because I was the only one available who knew much about Camp Warren. However, I do feel that Stoney’s statement is important because many YMCA executives are not aware of exactly what a camp director is called upon to do. In this talk, Stoney covered the ground in a very emphatic fashion. To quote him, “The camp director must be a man of many and varied talents and skills, he must understand human nature and material things, he must be an

executive who can train and lead a core of counselors, he must be able to recruit and challenge a strong committee that can give helpful counsel, morale and financial backing. Incidentally, no program of the YMCA has greater financial appeal than camping. The camp director must be an expert on food operation, housing, management, group work, and counseling. He must be a religious leader in his personal life, able to conduct an effective devotional service and offer careful counsel in the spiritual life of boys. He must be able to sell and promote, since a partially filled camp is a human and financial loss. He must be able to balance the budget and understand the wide range of physical, aquatic and social activities. I can hear a skeptic say, ‘There ain’t no such animal'. But we know there are. Some are naturals, some learn from books and conferences, all must be continuous students of their profession. Some arise via the route of camper, counselor or group leader. A camp director’s life at camp is taxing emotionally, physically, and spiritually. It is a solemn thing to be responsible for the health, happiness, safety and welfare of a hundred boys for any length of time. If I were a YMCA board member needing a general secretary. I would look for a man who was a successful camp director. Such a person would find the life of a general secretary relatively easy. For that matter, what better training or experience for any position than a camp director."

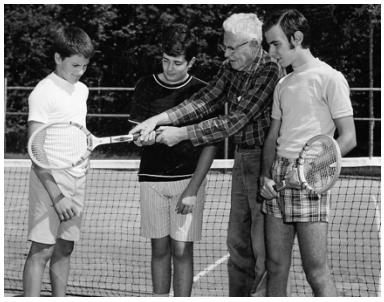


I found the life of a camp director a taxing one, but with enough wonderful compensations to make up for it. I along with every other single man has an advantage as a camp director because he won’t feel he’s neglecting his own family when he puts in the long and irregular hours that are a part of a camp director’s job. On two or three occasions during my span as camp director at the end of the day, I jotted down what I could remember of events that had grabbed my attention that day. I think it would be interesting at this point to list what I did on one of

those days. Of course, when a camp director makes note of a day like this everyone should realize that it was an unusually demanding sort of a day. I am glad to say that in my time as a camp director there were probably a half dozen days like this one that occurred. However, there were many that came close.

This particular day began with a feeling of no particular pressure. I did have to get up earlier than usual because our pony, Kid, had become entrapped on the tennis court the night before. He panicked when the counselors tried to herd him toward an exit and ran full tilt into the wire netting, and broke his neck. We had decided to get up early and bury the pony before the campers awoke so that the sadness of the occasion would not be driven home to them. Once that unpleasant task was completed, we had breakfast. I then took the bus driver into Virginia to pick up the bus which was being repaired and to get new tires on the trailer. At the same time, I gathered up the mail, took in a check to cash, and showed a couple of new staff people the iron mines in Virginia. Shortly after returning to camp, I was told the bus hadn't been fixed and was still ailing. I called a garage and arranged for a hitch to be put on my car, so that if the bus wasn't ready in time, I would be able to transport the short-border canoe trip scheduled to leave at 10:30 a.m. Bruce Konkler took my car in to get this job done. I then talked with the counselor leading the border trip only to find out that 10:30 was the latest time he could leave and still make a camp site before dark.

Since this schedule was up in the air, I decided to calm my nerves by picking berries in the raspberry patch. While picking raspberries, I was visited by man from military intelligence who requested information about a counselor and by a counselor who felt I needed to talk to some boys in his cabin who had broken into a locked cabinet and stolen some fireworks. Delivering the raspberries to the kitchen, I was informed that a camper was missing. We decided to wait until the dinner bell before taking any action. We figured missing a meal would be the acid test as to whether he was really missing or somewhere around camp where we hadn't been able to find him. At dinner the camper was still missing, and it was necessary to set the wheels in motion for handling an emergency of this kind.



The first thing, of course, was to call his mother in Minneapolis, an unpleasant job which I did. I then took one of the section heads and drove five miles south and six miles north to Eveleth, looking for a hitch hiker along the way. Nobody was spotted so we checked the bus station and the cabin camp. When I got back to camp, I found Whitey Luehrs, the general YMCA camp executive, loading the extra mattresses I had told him he could use for one of the other camps. I then found out as much as I possibly could about the missing boy by examining his file and by talking with his counselor and his section head. Afterwards, I called the highway patrol, the sheriff's office, and the manager of the Duluth bus depot and told them the situation. I requested that they do whatever they could to locate the boy.

While this was going on, some boys visited my office to get my signature as one of the required items on a scavenger hunt. I hope I wasn't too unpleasant because my mind was on more important things. I then took a few minutes to visit with Whitey about the missing boy as well as other camp matters. While I was doing this, a former counselor stopped in with his wife and children for a visit, and I'm sure to show off his

attractive-looking family. I told him I was really interested in visiting with him and his family and hoped they could stay around for a while. I explained the situation with the missing camper. Having been a counselor, I hoped he understood.

About 3:15 p.m. the missing camper's counselor appeared with the no-longer-missing camper who claimed he'd fallen asleep under a log in the woods during a camper hunt. The visiting counselor agreed to come back about 4:00 p.m. for a visit. I immediately called the boys' mother, the Duluth bus depot, the sheriff's office and the highway patrol to call off the search. Armin Ball, the director of Camp Widjiwagan, stopped in to pick up one of our staff members who was leaving to work at Widjiwagan. The visiting counselor and his family returned, and we visited for a few minutes. I then interviewed the camper who had fallen asleep in the woods.

A MISSING CAMPER

A missing camper is one of the most serious problems a director has to deal with. One's imagination works overtime as there are a number of things that might cause a camper to go missing. The usual one, of course, is simply being unhappy. This is the first thing to check. Over the course of my tenure as director, there have been very few incidents of this nature. When they have occurred, we did not take them lightly. I can remember one or two occasions when we drove four or five miles down the highway to find a boy trying to hitchhike home. We always considered it fortunate when we found the missing camper close to camp. We always contacted the parents right away. I found it prudent to have a serious conversation with the camper to reach an understanding as quickly as possible to prevent the situation from happening again. There are enough things to worry about when one is responsible for other people's children, things that could happen right on the camp property or when one knows where the camper is. However, it wasn't possible to safeguard a camper who's left camp without permission. Whenever this happened it was looked upon as a very serious offense. However, we never came up with any specific punishment to fit this behavior.

If a boy seemed sincerely regretful, agreed to stay at camp, and follow the rules in a trustworthy fashion, it was my general policy to give him a second chance. However, any further violations would result in immediate dismissal from the camp community. In most cases, the boys who were given a second chance came through for us. Parents, of course, were notified so that if a dismissal had to occur it wouldn't come as a complete shock.

MARKETING

Now to return to a few more points about promoting the camp, another important part of the camp director's job. One frequently asked question was the wisdom of starting a boy at camp when he was eight years old. My general feeling was that not all boys were ready for camp at eight but that there were a number who could handle and benefit from it. It varied from boy to boy. I remember one father talking to me about his eight-year-old son who lived on Lake Minnetonka and came from a sailing family. His father wanted him to have camp experience because he knew his son would eventually

become interested in sailboat racing on Lake Minnetonka. He, therefore, felt it was either eight years old or not at all. In the case of this boy, who had older brothers, there seemed to be no disadvantage to him attending at eight. While he attended camp that summer, it took a couple of years before the sailboat racing bug hit him. I remember another eight-year-old, a mature looking boy. I had visited his home to show the camp movie. After I left, the father phoned to say that much to their surprise, the boy had expressed a desire to attend camp for eight-year-olds.

Boys at this age are open to suggestion and many of their habits and attitudes are still in the formative stage. That gave the camp a great opportunity to contribute to their development as long as they were ready. Many eight-year-olds are not, however, and would benefit from a later start. When it comes to home sickness, the longer but rarer permanent type often occurs with boys who are twelve or thirteen and have never had the opportunity to live away from home. The younger campers were more flexible, could adjust more rapidly, and get a good start on developing a sense of independence. This is one good reason for a camp to offer an experience that can run a full eight weeks.

Some parents indicated they'd like to start their son at another camp before, at a later date, transferring him to what they viewed as a graduate experience at Camp Warren. This course of action had its pluses, one of which was financial. On the other hand, if the parents wanted the child to have a deep-rooted camp experience, it's probably not the best course to send him to another camp for his first experience. When a boy comes to feel at home at another camp, it would be of more benefit to him to return to a place where he is secure and already knows the ropes. He may not wish to leave that other camp so he can have another camp experience at Warren.

I would frequently be misunderstood as unreasonable for not allowing campers to arrive late or leave early. In the days when Warren was scrambling for campers, it was impossible to be too strict on this point but with more applications than beds in later years, we were able to be firm on this point. In many cases, our firm stand tended to shake up parents and families who needed extra days to complete family vacations. I am sure we may have lost the loyalty of a few campers and their families by not giving such permission, but I believe we gained much more than we lost. Families began to understand that we saw their child's camping experience as a self-contained unit and that it cheated a boy if he left early or missed some of the climactic events that were part of the camp program. When a camper did not reach the session's natural conclusion, he might show less interest in returning another year.

There was another very negative factor in a late arrival or an early departure. The boys tended to get upset when they saw their fellow campers packing their stuff and leaving early, leading them to spend more time thinking about family and home, triggering in them a desire to also leave early. If the boys saw another camper leaving early one year, requests would double in the following season. Eventually, it would get to a point where there would be no finish or cut-ff period. We did, of course, make allowances for illness, particularly at the opening and end of camp. However, this was not encouraged unless there was a definite need.

On occasion we competed with other camps for the same boy. We needed a camp philosophy and it needed to be crystal clear in our promotion. The owners or operators of independent or private camps sometimes felt that an organization like the

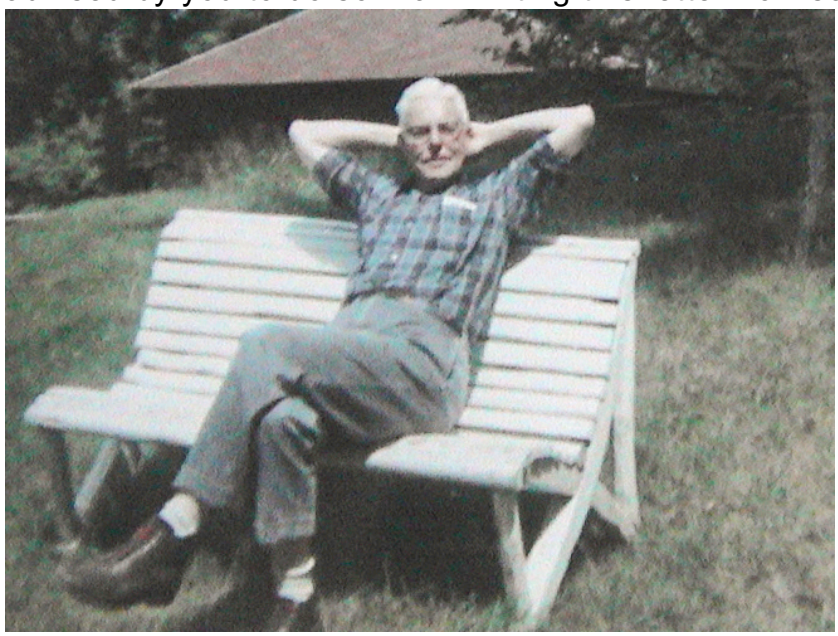
YMCA had no right to provide camping for boys who could afford to pay. We felt strongly that we could justify the wise operation of a camp like Warren. First, we felt camping helped to achieve the mission of the YMCA, and that a long-term camp allowed us to do a better job. A high-quality operation tended to add distinction to the Y's entire program and provide friends for the YMCA from economic and social levels it might not otherwise serve. For the country as a whole, the Y did a lot in its early years to promote camping, helping people understand its importance. We felt the Y had earned the right to benefit from that. We also felt we should operate the most outstanding type of camping at the lowest cost. Since we were not in it for the profit and were able to gain counsel and advice from prominent laymen at no cost, we were able to charge less. We needed to obtain and offer more scholarships for boys who could not pay the full amount.

While I had no reservations as to the importance of Camp Warren in an operation like the YMCA, I did feel it was extremely important that my approach to families and boys when trying to enlist campers was entirely ethical. I made it clear that I would never criticize other camps and never encourage a boy to change from a camp they had attended to Camp Warren. Sometimes parents felt that a change was both necessary and wise. But even in those cases I would try to clear the matter with the director of the other camp before accepting the boy at Warren.

I found many of the independent camp directors very cooperative and understanding about the place of Warren in the spectrum of camps. Fred B. Rogers, the fine and able Director of Camp Lincoln, was one of these. The two of us were always willing to share an approach that had proven successful, were always interested in gaining information. Fred was not just interested in his own camp but was always willing to donate his time to expanding camping in general. He was President of the Minnesota Camping Association and the President of the American Camping Association. He was one of those broad-minded men who furthered camping, its interests and its activities. After Camp Warren achieved full enrollment, it was a pleasure on my part to refer families to camp operators such as Fred Rogers.

ALL GOOD THINGS MUST COME TO AN END

Every good thing must come to an end. The following letter to the YMCA General Camp Supervisor, Whitey Luehrs, was written by me on September 10, 1968. It was written after considerable thought and with reluctance. It reads as follows: “Dear Whitey: After considerable pondering I have reluctantly come to the conclusion that I would like to retire from the directorship of Camp Warren after one more season, 1969. At camp the pressures of responsibility for other people’s children weigh more heavily as I get older. And I find it increasingly more difficult to handle a 24-hour-a-day living situation of 170 people with the accompanying human relations problems. As for the actual date of retirement is concerned, I want to do whatever is best for Camp Warren. I would be glad to work right up to the beginning of the 1970 season if that seems best. Retiring on May 12, 1970 when I would be 64 or any time previous, whatever fits in best with the tenure of my successor. While I would like to direct the camp next summer and feel this would complete any ethical obligations I might have to parents who are counting on my presence, I would be willing to move up my retirement date before the commencement of the 1969 season if in your judgment this would be desirable in terms of the availability of a successor. My main desire is retirement after one more season of actually directing the camp. I will be guided by you and the Camp Warren committee as to the best timing of the announcement of my retirement and have mentioned it only to the two long time members of the camp staff, Vern Olson, and Tommy Fuller. I will not mention it to others until advised by you to do so. I am writing this letter now so that there will be plenty of lead time to secure my successor. It is important in my judgement that the Camp Warren committee be instructed as to what its exact function will be in the transfer of authority. It should go without saying that I want to do anything possible.”



The above letter speaks for itself. Perhaps there might be a few words of addition or explanation. While the main reason for my resignation is as stated in the letter there were two or three other motivating factors. In all of my years as director there had never been a serious or fatal accident. I had gone through the tragic polio epidemic and did not wish to face anything of a like nature. In the previous two or three years some camps had

experienced drowning fatalities. These can happen in any family and any camp, and I was finding myself increasingly nervous about the possibility. Then, too, I believed that a younger man could handle the problems of camp living more effectively than an older one. Understanding the modern college age youth was increasingly difficult for me and from this group must come most of our staff.

All of us connected with the Camp Warren administration were aware of the difficulty involved in replacing a 35-year term director. That is the reason why I planned my retirement so far ahead of the actual date.

Asher Yumin Mayo
Future camper