

Tecumseh In The 1940's

From Bus Gager, 1940 - During a senior baseball game which George Stanley was umpiring and Newbold Smith was playing catcher, a foul ball hit him where it really hurt. In pain, he wanted them to throw him in the weeds and get on with the game. The camp doctor, Frederic James, put him to bed in the Farm House with an adhesive tape bridge between his legs for support. The device was some kind of bridge and after some rest he resumed camp activities.

From Karl Rugart, 1940 - Every year we set a new record for "super food" consumption (leaves of lettuce) and every year we set a new record for ears of corn consumed (over 40,000 in one year). On rainy days we learned to square dance. One summer, we had three famous pianists at camp all summer: Willy Kapell, Eugene Istomen and Walter Dabrowski. As a waiter, I once found myself in a general melee involving flicking pieces of butter with table knives and splattering ourselves and the walls. We kept adding pigs' nipples to Aram Pakradooni's meals. Aram was a fellow waiter.

I remember withdrawing the pricey sum of about \$20 from Gager's Bank at the end of one summer. I earned it snapping beans and picking corn at about 30 cents an hour.

From Ted Ely, 1942 - I was a waiter under Larry Cloud in 1941 and then head waiter in '42. Sixty years have dulled the memory somewhat, but certain events still hang in the imagery. Charlie Shreiner pitching his left handed curve ball across the plate, Bill Ryan hitting a long home run with the bases full, Dave Farley faithfully and skillfully caulking and painting a row boat or two during pre-season, Willy Kapell masterfully playing a concerto after hours, Newbold Smith wearing his ice pack after tangling with a bull at the farm, an unauthorized senior canoe trip at night across the lake to Melvin Village for dancing! The growing up lessons taught to me by Alex Grant, Forrest Gager and Al Wagner were genuine and valuable experiences, good for a lifetime. Thank you Tecumseh.

From John Fuller, 1943 - During World War II, when gasoline was rationed, many so-called trips were walking or canoeing ones. I was a Junior 'A' and we walked into Center Harbor from Camp for a 'guzzle' as we called it then (maximum consumption of contraband). A great time was had, but it was HOT. On the hike back, there were many stragglers, and the line of returning campers was stretching ever longer. Somewhere around Suicide Hill, two counselors (I really don't remember who they were now) picked up a length of barbed wire they found. With each counselor holding one end, and with the wire itself held over the road, they announced that any camper failing to walk at their pace would be 'tickled' with barbed wire in the appropriate body location. I don't remember whether any campers actually came into contact with the 'prod', but it had the desired effect, nonetheless. A true story.

From David Farley, 1944 - The following is a list of memories sent to me by David Farley, who was at Tecumseh from 1938 through 1944.

Pre and post season painting and repairs to boats and buildings. Planting vegetable gardens, particularly large crops of Mr. Grant's favorite - "superfood", i.e., leaf lettuce. Packard 1928 convertible. Waking up and stretching in the morning, up early to pasteurize Clint Grace's and Horace Fife's milk. Hoisting full milk cans; every several days taking my turn to start the boiler.

Being a soccer referee and coaching. Sailing instruction. The Presidential Mountain Range hikes and canoe trips. Willy Kappel and Eugene Istomin, each magnificent piano players who had five grand pianos for practice (present of Madam Samaroff).

After supper at Mr. Grant's table, seeing kleptomaniac neighbor scuttling in the evening dusk to his car with some Tecumseh silverware and firewood and gunning his engine, but going nowhere because the Griffin brothers had wedged the rear wheels off the ground.

Ms. Lucy's baked fresh scrod and her Sunday evening cinnamon buns served by the lake. Playing the landlord in *Cox & Box* and performing in various Gilbert & Sullivan shows, some with Singing Eagle girls. Productions guided by Henry Williams and Walter Johnson.

The weekly *Sunbeam* newspaper. The famous launch from the 1920's which we would caulk and get the four cylinder Star engine in running order, then putting it in the water and taking it for a run, only to find the next morning that it sunk to the sandy bottom. The name Thetis came from the British World War II sub which sunk in Liverpool Bay on its maiden voyage in June, 1939.

Other memories: young Forrest Gager trying to get Otto engine started to make Sunday ice cream. Hastings and Tyler Griffin, Larry Cloud and Bill Gibson.

From Dave McMullin, 1945 - I was only 7 years old as I prepared to head off to Tecumseh for the first time. Our family was on vacation in Nantucket in June, 1945, when it was time for my mother to take me to the train station in Boston. I was to take the train from Boston to Meredith, New Hampshire. She put me on the train by myself in North Station in Boston and told me to ask the conductor to tell me when we arrived in Meredith, so that I could get off. Mom told me that somebody would meet me at the station and take me to camp. I had never even seen Camp Tecumseh before. All I had heard from my father was, that it was a great place, and I would like it. Not knowing anyone, I then headed off for the greatest place on earth by myself.

That train ride, Mr. Grant, Forrest (The Fox) Gager, Al Wagner, Pinky Shover, Frank Osgood, George Munger, Beetle Fiero, and all of the myriad of experiences I had over 14 years at Tecumseh contributed so much to whatever strength of character, values, competitiveness, and independence that I may possess. I will never be able to fully pay back my debt to Camp Tecumseh. (note: McMullin is now the Chairman of the Board of Trustees at Tecumseh).

From Peter Benoliel, 1945 - (Peter has been an active part of Tecumseh for over 55 years. He was Chairman Of The Board of Trustees for many years and is still very active as a Trustee). When I first attended Camp, Mr. Grant was still the Director. I have vivid memories of him. My first was when he came to our house in Mt. Airy to talk to my father and myself about Camp. I was rather tentative about going, but my father was enthusiastic and the rest is history. In fact, there is an ironic turn about that history, because as I progressed through college years, my father felt that it might be time for me to make a change in my life, but I, by that time, was totally wedded to camp.

Undoubtedly, some of the most important lessons of life were first learned at Camp, several at the hands of Mr. Grant:

1. Purpose and perseverance - Mr. Grant lost a leg and had increasing difficulty moving about, yet he was un-failing in attending to what he saw as his duties as Director. I make specific reference to his "directing" the noon and evening swim hours which entailed him walking out on the pier and then painfully climbing the ladder into the observation booth. None of us were permitted in the water until he said, "All in." I was not so much aware of it at the time, but in later years this mental picture of him laboriously climbing up that ladder twice a day without fail speaks volumes to me.
2. Gentleness - At each meal, we would remain standing at our chairs until Mr. Grant announced "Gentleman, be seated." But, there was a specific incident that underlined for me how a real gentleman operates. One afternoon, a youngster came running up to the senior ball field where we were engaged in a Blue-Gray baseball game. He told me that Mr. Grant wanted to see me at the end of the game. At the conclusion of the game, I went to Mr. Grant's cabin by the Dining Hall, and he asked me to be seated. He then proceeded to question whether I was enjoying myself and having a good summer. I replied enthusiastically in the affirmative. He then went on to ask whether it was the custom in my family to drink milk from a pitcher. I was very embarrassed and replied, "No," whereupon he merely observed that he was curious about the fact. He then went on to say how pleased he was that I was enjoying myself and sent me on my way. Obviously, at the noon meal, I had done just that at the conclusion of the revolving chore of stacking the dishes.

3. We were having breakfast on the last day of 1946, prior to departing for home. Mr. Grant got up at the conclusion of the meal and requested that we all sing "Oh, What a Beautiful Morning" from the Rogers & Hammerstein show *Oklahoma*. We did. He then went out and sat on the porch of his cabin. A number of boys stopped by to say goodbye. I was one of them. As I walked up the hill towards the Lodge, I had tears welling up in my eyes, and I had the feeling that I had said goodbye for the last time. Alas, it was true. He passed away the following winter.

From Franklin Osgood - The following story is a recap of Tecumseh in the 1940's. Franklin Osgood attended camp from 1938 - 1951. He later served as a counselor. His brother Bill also attended, as did his son Taylor Osgood, who was at camp in the 1960's and 1970's. This article is reprinted from the Winter 1998 edition of *The Blue-Gray Banner*.

Camp Tecumseh in the 1940's was different from most other camps of that era by being a year-round farm and dairy, overlaid with summer campers. Since the 1940's were war years, with food rationing, Tecumseh's unlimited butter, cream and meat were major luxuries for campers.

I suspect that the Farm House at the top of the property still exists, but George Hathaway and Horace Fife, the resident farmers, are surely gone. They were responsible for haying the fields which bordered the dirt road down toward the camp proper. Above the tennis courts each spring they started a major vegetable garden and a field of sweet corn. Campers were expected to help with the harvest: picking beans for three cents a quart, and gathering endless bushels of lettuce and corn. Lettuce leaves sans dressing were required eating for campers every day all summer; corn was served thrice daily when ripe, usually in August.

The dairy required an extensive cow barn below the Farm House bay barn. From here the raw milk came down to the Dining Hall each day to be pasteurized by a pair of campers, presumably trained by the indomitable Mr. Gager. Next to the pasteurizing room at the rear of the Dining Hall was my particular realm. There, during my teenage years, a group including Walter Hepenstall and I tried to make 40 gallons of ice cream every other day under the demanding supervision of Warren "Pebble" Stone. Considering that the recipe called for a third heavy cream and two thirds light cream, it should have been a lot better than I remember it being. (An occasional cricket that "fell" into the mixture added interest.)

Refrigeration in the 1940's was still ice from the lake, cut each winter and sledded to the Ice House behind the Dining Hall where layer after layer of ice were packed in sawdust. The lowest layer was supposedly a hundred years old. Daily ice cream crew and kitchen helpers dug loose the huge blocks, swung them out of the house with block and tackle and ducked them with great splashes into a tub to remove the sawdust insulation.

The farm aspect of Tecumseh was an eye opener to most of us young campers. Our backgrounds were decidedly urban and suburban. Participation in haying, weeding, harvesting, and endless other chores undoubtedly influenced many of us and gave us some early appreciation of New England rural life.

From Andy Supplee, 1948 - The following is a letter written by Andy to his mother on August 13, 1948. Andy was one of the youngest campers that year. He returned to Tecumseh for many more years. I have tried to re-type this letter exactly as it was originally written.

Dear Mom,

Im sorry I didn't write before. But I didn't know your address. Last Monday we went on an over night trip to flat rock. Bill Ryan was going to bring the food over in the moter boat but he smashed it on a rock. It was lcky he didn't hert him self. Some lady saw the wreck and called up the camp. Dick Ryan and the lady brought the food over in a rowboat. We got the food about 2 ours after we should off. We were lucky it didn't raine. Still it was very wet. I didn't now how to fix the poncho so that it would keep the bed dry. It came half way down to the middle of the blanket.

Some time this week were going on an over night trip to redhill. I'll have to go now will write soon.

love

Andy

Alexander Grant's Last Will and Testament - The following are excerpts from Alexander Grant's will. Mr. Grant ran Tecumseh from 1903 through 1946. He died a month after camp ended in 1946. His will set up camp to be run by a Board of Trustees and be run as a non-profit entity.

... Over forty years ago I helped to establish Camp Tecumseh on Moultonboro Neck, Center Harbor, New Hampshire, and, through these years, I have believed in Camp Tecumseh as a great American institution for the development and training under ideal conditions of a boy's own best self and of his character, qualities of leadership and sportsmanship, and of his ability in various forms of athletic, aesthetic, and manly endeavor. In making the following gift, devise and bequest to the Trustees hereinafter named who have from time to time had many years of association with the Camp, are deeply interested in its problems and have shown a broad understanding and judgment in advising in their solution, I have absolute confidence that Camp Tecumseh will be perpetuated in the way that is best as a camp for boys.

I give, bequeath and devise all my interests and stock in Camp Tecumseh, a corporation of the State of New Hampshire, and in any property of mine or interest therein in or about what is known as Camp Tecumseh, which interests are hereinafter referred to as "Camp Tecumseh", situated on Moultonboro Neck, Lake Winnepesaukee, Center Harbor, New Hampshire, except as provided in Article First hereof, to:

Arthur Armstrong
Walter E. Johnson
William E. Lingelbach, Jr.
David C. Spooner, Jr.
Henderson Supplee, Jr.
Lewis P. Tabor and
Henry B. Williams,

their survivors and / or successors, as hereinafter provided, absolutely, in trust, however, under the subject to the following terms and conditions which in my judgment seem desirable and advisable, namely:

- A. The Trustees aforesaid, their survivors and / or successors as hereinafter provided, shall be known as "The Trustees of Camp Tecumseh,, hereinafter referred to as "Trustees..
- B. Camp Tecumseh shall be known as "Camp Tecumseh" and shall be owned and controlled directly or indirectly by the Trustees.
- C. Camp Tecumseh shall exist perpetually.
- D. Camp Tecumseh shall not be run for profit, but for the purpose aforesaid; namely, as an institution for the development and training of boys' own best selves, of their character, qualities of leadership and sportsmanship and their abilities in various forms of athletic, aesthetic and manly endeavor.
- ...
- F. It is my desire, but not a condition of this gift, devise and bequest of Camp Tecumseh, that preference and special consideration shall be given by the Trustees in the selection of Director and assistant Director for Camp Tecumseh, to Alvin S. Wagner and Forrest L. Gager, and in the selection of counselors for the boys at Camp Tecumseh to Bertram P. Shover, Arthur F. Armstrong and Franklin F. Osgood, all of whom are persons of tried and proven ability as Counselors in helping to aid in the development of boys in the manner aforementioned. ...

From Bus Gager, 1946 - I was a truck driver at Tecumseh after WWII. I had a gallon jug of turpentine in a cardboard box, along with other purchases from Weeks and Smith, in the open pickup truck. As I approached Camp on the Neck Road, I saw blue smoke in the mirror. The truck didn't burn oil so I knew something was amiss. As I stopped by McCormack's store, a man (probably "Busta") came out with a fire extinguisher. The fire was put out and the flammable solvent hadn't even spilled. Back at camp, I thoroughly washed out the bed of the truck to get rid of any acid and the truck was no worse for wear. The glass jug had acted like a magnifying glass and focused the sun's rays on the cardboard, which was only smoldering when I stopped.

From Bus Gager, 1949 - One of my last and best memories involves Craig Baume, a senior in my tent. As truck driver, I had the pleasure of taking baby skunks to a vet near Laconia for de-scenting. My dad, (the Red Fox) caught a skunk. After "treatment, the skunk was kept in the nature hut. One day, a family, including an attractive sister, came to visit a camper. Lee Haslam was the nature counselor and had taken the skunk out to show the family. Somehow, the skunk walked away while Lee was socializing. Some days later, Craig caught a baby skunk behind the ice house at the garbage cans. He started up the hill toward the Lodge and yelled out: "Mr. Gager, I found your skunk, oh, oh, it's not yours!!" We had to burn his clothes and he got to bathe in what had been Mr. Grant's private tub.

From Bill Hamilton, 1949 - Back in the 1940's, in the Junior C, B and A cabins, they took Widdow Roll Call each night for each camper in the cabin before going to bed. What the counselors needed to know was whether or not you had gone to the Widdow that day and been successful. They kept a record of the number of days that you had not gone to the bathroom. At two or three days, they would ask if you noticed anything different, like if your eyeballs were feeling dry. At four days, you were sent to see the doc.



Willy Kappell entertains the Tecumseh crowd inside the Lodge in 1942. Kappell would go on to be a world famous musician.



Constructing a human pyramid in 1943.



Jim Gould, David Spooner, Walter Johnson and Harry Jones on the steps of the Lodge in 1943. Spooner first came to Tecumseh in 1907 and was one of the original Trustees put in charge of Tecumseh after Alexander Grant's death. Spooner continued going up to Tecumseh until the late 1970's.



Ralph Evans leading a group of campers up Mt. Washington in 1945.



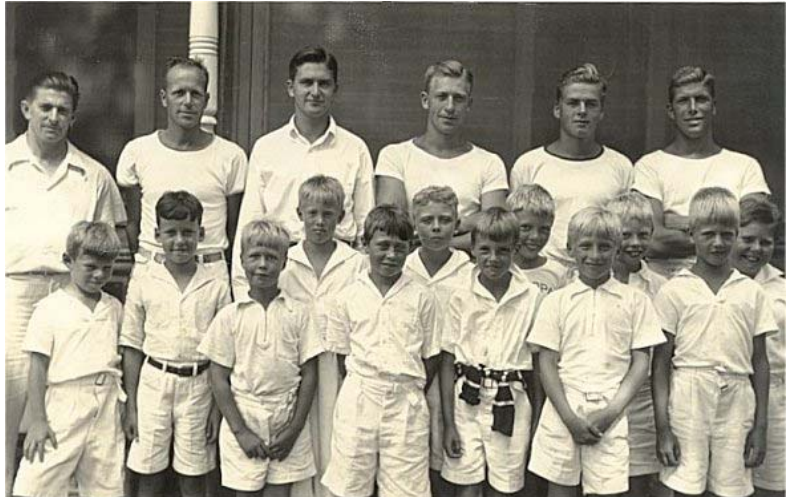
The Seniors in 1940. Back row: Cartier, Stew McCracken, Perky Granger, Fiero, Lesson, Kerno Knox, Walter Dabrowsky, Henry Mayer, Unknown, Unknown, Drexel, Jay Cueueen, Scott Smith, Unknown, Bill Batchett, Chas Fritz, Gordon Yocum.

Middle row: Al Wagner (Associate Director), Cedric Norton, Unknown, Hastings Griffin, Unknown, Unknown, Bill Spofford, Karl Rugart, Pete Hires, Unknown, Bill Ryan, Unknown, Knodel, Unknown, Bill Gibson, Charlie Shreiner.

Front row: Roger Miller, Chas Roberts, Bob Stanley, Larry Cloud, Unknown, Ed Sprankle, Unknown, Fred Bird, Bus Gager, Bob Clark, Aram Pakradooni, Andy Knox.



On the Thetis in 1941: Bus Gager, Gibson, Unknown, Randy Stone, and David Farley.



The Junior C's in 1940. The counselors are: Forrest L. Gager, Frank Osgood, Dr. Poinard, Roy Miller, Hastings Griffin, and Nelson Degerberg.



Intermediates in 1940.
Back Row: Farley, Ely, Cancelmo, McCracken, Shriver.
Middle Row: Latta, Reese, Deacon, Stone.
Front Row: D. Knoedel, Rodger Hillas.



Performing *Thespis* in the Lodge in 1940.



Riding in the Chris Craft in 1940. In the front of the boat are Newbold Ely, David Farley, and driver Lew Tabor. In the middle are Bob Knodel, Willy Kapell, and Larry Cloud. In the back, standing is Pebble Stone.



Alexander Grant, 1940.



1948: Fourth from left: Peter Lyons (later Peter Kotzenback), John Lloyd, Dave McMullin, Winky Rawl, Buz Buckley, Felix Jackson, Unknown, Unknown, and Hunter McMullin.



Fred James and Dick Allen, 1946.



Rehearsing for *H.M.S. Pinafore* in 1949. To the far left is Brooks Keffer. To the right is director Henry Williams. Standing just in front of Williams, playing Buttercup, is Ralph Pinheiro who won the Junior Tecumseh Boy Award that year.



Charlie Shreiner and Don Miller at the long jump pit in 1940.

This photo of the rifle range was taken around 1945.

George Finks is on the far left. The counselor at the table is Ralph Evans.

Three campers to the right of Ralph is Dave Haslam. Chuck Chadwick is standing.

The person shooting from a seated position is Frank Osgood, Jr. Lying down next to him is Larry Zullinger. Next to him is Rollie Morris.



The Junior B's on top of Mt. Major in 1947.

Top row: John Latta, Ted Roberts, Unknown, Dave McMullin, Jim Lehman, William Rawle.

Middle row: Boopie James, Duncan Van Dusen, Bill Pope, John Lloyd, Unknown, Bill Miller, Pete Lyons, Walt Buckley, Hunzinger.

Front row: Jim James.



The Junior B's in 1949.

Top row: Pebble Stone, Peter Benoiel, Frank Osgood, John Fuller, Colson Hillier.

Middle row: 1. Jay Bragdon, 3. Ned Kreiger, 5. Phil Cohan, 7. Andy Supplee.

Kneeling: 1. Jim Thomas, 2. Jay James, 5. Lew Mutschler, 6. Hunter McMullin.

